

FIVE CENTS

BRAVE AND BOLD

A DIFFERENT COMPLETE STORY EVERY WEEK

No 1

ONE BOY IN A
THOUSAND
or
Yankee to the Backbone



Tom sprang from his berth, flung open the door, and seized Mr. Maxwell and dragged him out into the cabin.

BRAVE & BOLD

A Different Complete Story Every Week

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ONE BOY IN A THOUSAND;

OR,

YANKEE TO THE BACKBONE.

BY FRED THORPE.

CHAPTER I.

A BOSTON WAIF.

"I'll take yer home, mister. Where d'yer live?"

And the speaker, a ragged but bright-faced boy of fourteen or fifteen, pressed his way through a crowd of youngsters who had been teasing a drunken man, and placed himself between them and their victim.

"Here, gimme yer bag," he went on. "Maybe yer don't live in de city. I guess yer from New York."

"You're right, I am," returned the man in a thick voice, as he turned his bloodshot eyes upon the lad's face.

"I t'ought so. I gen'ally knows a New Yorker w'en I sees him. Was yer a-goin' home?"

"Yes."

"Well, yer'd better/not try ter travel jest now."

"I guess you're right," replied the stranger with the same dazed look.

He was a well-dressed, elderly man, and was evidently ashamed of the condition in which he found himself.

Then, turning to the old man, the boy said:

"What hotel yer stoppin' at, mister?"

"The Parker House. Know where it is?"

"Cert—up on School Street."

"You'd better call a carriage, boy."

"Guess, yer right, mister. Hello, Johnny!"—the last exclamation addressed to a passing hackman, who promptly reined up.

With some difficulty the muscular little fellow assisted the gentleman to the carriage and helped him in.

He was about to take his leave, when the old man said:

"Hold on, boy."

"What is it, mister?"

"Get in here."

"What fer?"

"I want to talk to you."

The boy jumped in, and the carriage started up one of the crookedest of Boston's many crooked streets.

"I've gbt more on board than I'm able to carry, boy," said the stranger.

His utterance was thick. He articulated with considerable difficulty.

"I see yer have, sir," replied the lad.

His reply was perfectly respectful, almost diffident.

"What's your name?"

"Thomas Woods."

"I thought those fellows called you Tom Tough."

The boy laughed.

"Dey did; it's a name dey've give me."

"How did you earn it?"

"By bein' tough, I reck'n mister. Dey ain't no t'ree of 'em kin lick me."

He made the announcement with a good deal of complacency.

"I don't doubt it," returned his companion. "You're a newsboy, aren't you?"

"Newsboy, bootblack, messenger. I kin do most any'ting."

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The carriage halted in front of the Parker House. The driver and Tom helped the old gentleman to alight, while a porter took his valise.

"Good-by, sir," said the boy, starting off.

But the old man laid a hand upon his shoulder, saying:

"Wait a minute."

"What fer, sir?"

"I want to give you something for your trouble in my behalf."

"Oh, dat's all right."

"No, it isn't. Here's a half a dollar for you."

But Tom drew back.

"I didn't do nothin' ter earn it, sir. Please keep it. I never likes ter handle no money dat I don't work fer."

"Well, you're one boy in a thousand," said the old gentleman; and the driver looked as if he thought so, too.

Tom said nothing.

"I've taken a fancy to you," went on the stranger. "Can't you come here and see me in the morning?"

"Me, sir?" asked the lad in astonishment.

"Certainly."

"Yes, sir, I kin ef yer want me ter."

"I do. Come at about nine o'clock."

"All right, sir."

"Ask for me at the office—my name is Maxwell."

"Yes, sir."

"And now, driver, help me upstairs. I've got a bigger load on than you'd think. My tongue will work, but my legs won't."

"A regular Boston drunk," laughed the driver familiarly. "Yer orter live here, sir."

With a good-natured "good-by, sir," the boy walked away.

At nine o'clock the next morning our young hero presented himself at the office of the Parker House.

He had taken some pains with his personal appearance.

He had washed his face until you could have seen your own in it, and his hair was carefully combed and plastered down with water.

His clothes, too, had evidently had a brushing, and in several places missing buttons were supplied with pins.

"I wanter see Mr. Maxwell," he announced, marching up to the office.

The clerk grinned.

"You do, eh? And who are you, Johnny?"

"I hain't got a card wid me, Georgie, but he'll know who I am."

The smile faded from the official's face.

"Who are you calling Georgie?" he demanded, wrathfully.

"You," was the prompt reply. "An' who are you a-callin' Johnny?"

"How dare you address me so familiarly?"

"Same reason dat you put on lugs wid me. Say, I hain't got no time ter swap chin wid you. I wanter see Mr. Maxwell."

"Get out of here, you young ragamuffin."

"No, I won't git out," maintained Tom, stoutly, almost defiantly. "You're here on big wages ter wait on de gents w'at comes here an' dere friends. Well, I'm Mr. Maxwell's friend. See? Send up an' tell him dat Tom Woods is here, or I'll report yer."

Just then a senior clerk stepped forward, saying, good humorously:

"Send up the boy's name. I think he's the one that came home with Mr. Maxwell last evening."

"Dat's just who I am," added Tom. "De gent asked me ter come an' see him, an' dat's w'y I'm here."

The young man wrote Tom's name on a card, and gave it to a bellboy, ordering him to take it to Mr. Maxwell's room.

In a few minutes the boy came back, saying:

"Mr. Maxwell says he's to come right up."

"Then show him to the room," ordered the senior clerk.

CHAPTER II.

TOM FINDS A FRIEND.

The bellboy started for the staircase.

But Tom called him back.

"Hold on dere!"

"What's the matter?"

"I don't keer 'bout walkin' up—I'll take de elevator."

The boy hesitated and looked at the clerk.

"He is right," said that official. "As the guest of one of our guests he is certainly entitled to use the elevator. Show him to it."

The boy obeyed.

Tom seated himself upon the luxurious, cushioned-seat as if he had been used to that sort of thing all his life.

It must not be imagined from the foregoing that Tom Woods was an aggressive boy who was always "looking for a fight."

On the contrary, he never sought one, but kept out of them as much as he could.

But he was always quick to defend himself when attacked, for he had a Yankee's innate dislike of being "downed" by any one.

A few minutes after the brief wordy encounter which we have chronicled he was shown into Mr. Maxwell's room.

He found the old gentleman reclining upon a soft. He did not arise, but extended his hand, which Tom took almost timidly.

"How are you this morning?" he asked.

"First-rate, sir," replied the boy.

"As you see, I'm in rather better condition than when we last met."

"Yes, I see you are, sir."

"Oh,' as Shakespeare says, 'that man will put an enemy in his mouth to steal awy his brains,'" exclaimed Mr. Maxwell.

"It didn't seem ter git away wid your brains, sir," responded Tom, "but it kinder knocked de life out o' yer legs."

The old gentleman laughed.

"You're right there, Tom—let's see, you said your name was Tom Woods, didn't you?" he said.

"Yes, sir, or Tom Tough, whichever yer likes ter call me."

"Well, I think I prefer the former. My name is also Thomas—Thomas Maxwell. And now we can consider ourselves formally introduced. Will you let me ask you a few questions, Tom?"

"As many as yer wanter, sir."

"Are your parents living?"

"No, sir, dey's both dead."

"Have they been dead long?"

"My mudder died w'en I was a baby, an' my fader w'en I was bout eight years old."

"And you are now—?"

"Most fifteen."

"And all these years you have had to shift for yourself?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you no relatives in Boston?"

"Haven't got none nowhere, sir."

"Where do you live?"

Tom stared at the old gentleman.

"W'y, right here in Boston, sir."

"I know, but I mean in what street?"

The boy laughed.

"I don't run no swell-front house on Beacon Street, Mr. Maxwell. I live most anywhere."

"But where do you sleep?"

"Wherever I git a chance—gen'ally in de street."

"You've had a hard life."

"Oh, I dunno," said Tom; "ther's plenty had harder."

"That's the best way to look at it, my boy. We can never be so low down that there is not some one lower."

"Dat's w'at I t'ink, sir; but I don't wanter keep down no longer'n I kin help."

"You're right in that, too, Tom. Have you had any schooling?"

The boy's face clouded.

"No, sir, I hain't; an' dat's w'at has worried me mor'n anything else."

"You can read, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes sir. I kin read an' write, an' cipher some. I wouldn't be no good fer de newspaper biz ef I couldn't read."

"I suppose not."

"No, sir. A newsboy in Boston ain't like one in New York. He's got ter know somethin' or git out. Why, dere was a young Mick dat couldn't read tried ter start in de biz a while ago. He wanted de odder fellers ter tell him what de news was one mornin', so he'd know what ter holler. We told him dat John L. Sullivan had died o' consumption, an' he went yellin' it all over town till he struck a sport dat had just seen Sullivan, an' got kicked all over de Common."

"That was rather rough on him," said Mr. Maxwell.

"Well," returned Tom, "a feller ter git along in Boston has got ter know his A B C's, anyhow."

"Well, to get back to yourself," said the old gentleman, "you would like to have a good education?"

"Yes, sir, I would," replied the boy, decidedly.

"You would like to have a better position in life, to sleep in a nice bed in a comfortable room?"

"Of course I would, sir."

"Well, you shall."

Tom stared at his companion.

"What d' yer mean?"

"What I say. Would you like to work for me?"

"What doin'?" asked the boy, eagerly.

"Well, I want a boy to travel with me, to carry my valise, run errands for me—to do a thousand and one things that I am either too old or too lazy to do for myself. I'll pay ten dollars a week and expenses. Do you want the job?"

Tom stared at the old gentleman incredulously.

"Say, yet ain't foolin', are yer, Mr. Maxwell?" he asked.

"Certainly not," was the reply. "I was never more in earnest in my life."

"Ten a week an' expenses, yer said?"

"Yes."

"Jest ter travel wid yer an' wait on yer?"

"That's the idea, my boy."

"Den it's a bargain an' here's my hand on it."

And Tom extended that member in the utmost good faith.

Mr. Maxwell grasped it, murmuring:

"By Jove! he is Yankee to the backbone."

CHAPTER III.

TOM TRANSFORMED.

"I suppose" went on Tom's new employer, "that you won't object to traveling?"

The boy's eyes kindled.

"Object, sir! Well, I guess not. W'y ever since I've knowned there was any place outside o' Boston I've wanted ter travel. I've read 'bout different cities in de United States an' Europe, an' sometimes I've dreamed I was in 'em."

"You are an enthusiast on the subject of travel, then?" laughed Mr. Maxwell.

"I dunno what dat is," said the boy, "but I guess I am. Dere ain't nothin' I'd sooner do dan travel."

"Well, you shall have a chance, for all my time is spent in traveling."

"Is dat so, sir?"

"Yes."

"Ain't yer in no business?"

"No; I retired years ago. You have given me the history of your life, Tom; perhaps you would like to hear mine."

"Jest as you say, sir," replied the boy, modestly.

"Well, there isn't a great deal to tell. I was born and brought up in the country; and, like you, I lost my parents when I was very young. Until I was twenty I worked on a farm. That's a hard sort of life, but I suppose you don't know much about it?"

"No, sir."

"When I was twenty I ran away from the farm, where I had a hard taskmaster, and went to New York. It was the first time I had ever been in a great city."

"Yer must ha' been terrible green, sir."

"I was, and I had to suffer for it; but I got over it after a while."

"I guess yer was pretty fly, Mr. Maxwell," commented Tom, ingenuously.

The gentleman laughed.

"Well, I could hold my own; but I got into bad company."

"Dere's plenty of it in New York, I guess, sir."

"There is enough of it everywhere, Tom. It was soon after my arrival in the city that I first tasted liquor. The habit grew on me, and I have never been able to give it up."

"Dat's kinder tough, sir."

"It is a melancholy fact, my boy. Well, to go on with my story: While I was struggling along making a precarious living in the great metropolis, a wealthy uncle, a brother of my father's, died and left me his entire fortune—a very large one."

"Dat was big luck, sir."

"I had a sister—she is still living—who, although wealthy herself, coveted this fortune. She contested the will."

"I wouldn't want no sich a sister as dat, sir. But 'scuse me, I didn't mean ter say dat. I hope yer ain't mad?"

Mr. Maxwell smiled sadly.

"Not in the least, Tom. I cannot shut my eyes to the faults of my sister because she is my flesh and blood. She is a hard, cold, cruel woman."

"She didn't git none o' de money, did she, sir?"

"No; the suit was decided against her."

"Dat was good."

"Since then I have not seen her, but she is living in New York, where I also have a house, which I but seldom occupy. All these years I have traveled. I have been all over the world; and I am about to start on another trip."

"An' I'm ter go wid yer, sir?" and the boy's eyes shone with delight

"You are to go with me, and to pursue your education in the meantime. I think you will be pretty good company, Tom, for you seem to be always in a good humor. Don't you ever worry?"

"Sometimes, sir, but not very often."

"Well, go and dispose of your bootblack kit. Where is it?"

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"Down in a news-stand on Brattle Square dat's kep' by a friend o' mine."

"When you have attended to your own business come back here, and we will see about getting you a new wardrobe."

"A new w'at, sir?"

"A new suit of clothes."

"Yes, sir, I guess I'll have ter have 'em ef I'm a-goin' to travel wid you. But yer kin take de price of 'em out o' my wages, Mr. Maxwell."

"That will be all right, Tom. Now go along with you."

"Ain't dere nothin' I kin do fust?—shine up yer shoes, or brush yer coat, or—"

"No, no, go along, and take your time. We have not got to leave Boston until five o'clock."

"All right, sir."

And the boy left the room.

"Noble little fellow!" exclaimed Mr. Maxwell with moistened eyes. "He has taught me a lesson of self-sacrifice that I need. I like that boy. Bah! Tom Maxwell, what's this? Crying? You're an old fool! Take a drink!"

And he drew a flask from his pocket and placed it to his lips. But the next moment he set it down untasted.

"No," he exclaimed, "I'll try and profit by the lesson. I won't touch it."

An hour later Tom came back, his face radiant.

"I give him de kit, Mr. Maxwell," he said, "an' he was de most tickled youngster yer ever seen."

"I'm glad of it, Tom," smiled the old gentleman. "Well, now, suppose we go out and get your new clothes."

"Maybe yer'd radder not walk on de street wid me, sir," suggested the boy, shrinkingly. "I could walk a little ways behind."

"No, no," said Mr. Maxwell. "If you were not ashamed to be seen with me in the condition I was in last night it would be in poor taste for me to object to your company were your garments twice as shabby as they are. Go ahead, my boy."

"By jingo," muttered Tom to himself, "he's a brick—that's what he is! Dere ain't nothin' I wouldn't do fer dat gent."

When the waif was clothed in a brand-new suit, neat linen collar and cuffs, a derby hat, a "four-in-hand" scarf, trim boots, and even supplied with a watch and chain, and a scarfpin, a wondrous transformation was wrought.

"Is it possible that this is you, Tom?" exclaimed Mr. Maxwell, surveying the boy.

"No, sir," said our hero, eying himself in the clothier's mirror, "I guess it must be somebody else, fer I don't know myself."

"Well, you're quite a swell," smiled the old man; "and I shouldn't wonder if you'd be ashamed to travel with me before very long."

The boy took the remark more in earnest than in jest.

"No, sir-ee," he said, earnestly. "After what yer've done fer me I'd stick ter yer t'rough anyting."

"I don't doubt it," said Mr. Maxwell. "Well, perhaps some day I shall put your devotion to the test."

He little imagined how soon the test would be made.

CHAPTER IV.

IN AWFUL PERIL.

At five o'clock that afternoon Tom and his new-found patron started for New York.

They took a train at that hour, and were to make connection with a Sound steamer at about nine.

Tom was in the highest of spirits, and was anxious—over-

anxious—to do all he possibly could to promote his employer's comfort.

They took seats in a parlor car, the boy being given just as good accommodations as his companion.

He was so solicitous for Mr. Maxwell's welfare that the old gentleman at last said, good-naturedly:

"Oh, let up on me, Tom. Do you smoke?"

"Yes, sir. Most o' de boys in my biz does."

"I thought so. Well, here's a cigar."

"T'ank ye, sir; but dey won't let me smoke in here, will dey?"

"No. Go into the smoking-car; it's the next one to this."

"But yer might want me, sir."

"No, I shan't. Get along with you."

Tom obeyed.

"Dunno but Mr. Maxwell t'inks I'm too fresh," he muttered.

"But all I wants is ter earn my ten a week."

He seated himself by a window and began puffing away at his cigar.

He soon became conscious that he was being observed by an individual who sat on the other side of the aisle.

This person was a stalwart, heavily-built young fellow of about twenty-three or four. But although Nature had evidently done her best to make a man of him, he had tried hard to defeat her object.

He was a dude of the most pronounced type.

He was dressed in an ultra-fashionable style, his big feet were squeezed into shoes at least two sizes too small for them, and his forehead was adorned with a carefully cut bang of a golden hue.

He was a painful sight, so thought Tom. For a while the dude sat surveying him; then, to the boy's surprise, he arose and came over to where he was seated.

"Me boy," he began, drawlingly.

"What is it?" asked Tom.

And perhaps there was a double meaning to his words.

"May I ahsk yaw name?"

"Yes," replied the boy, shortly.

"Well—er—what is it?"

"It's Tom Woods."

"Aw! ba Jove! Then you're not his son?"

"Whose son?"

"The—aw—the gentleman yaw're traveling with, don'tcher know. Mamma wanted me to ahsk, don'tcher know."

"Oh, yer mommer wanted yer to ask, eh?"

"Ya-as."

"Where is yer mommer?"

"In the next car—the same one where Mr. Maxwell is, don'tcher know."

"Oh, you know Mr. Maxwell, eh?"

"Ya-as; but only by sight."

"Well, I've told yer my name; now maybe yer'll tell me yours."

The dude hesitated; then he said:

"It's Gussie Smythe—with a 'y,' don'tcher know."

"Oh, it's Gussie Smythe with a 'y,' eh?" responded Tom, with all the impudence born of a life in the streets. "Well, Gussie Smythe—with a 'y'—yer kin go an' tell yer mommer dat Mr. Tom Woods sends her his regards."

"Ah—ba, Jove! You're a singular boy."

"Think so?"

"Ya—as. Why are you traveling with Mr. Maxwell?"

"I'm a-workin' fer him," replied Tom, promptly.

"Working faw him! his valet! Ah, ba Jove!"

And with this exclamation of horror the dude hurried away.

"Well, he's a healthy young pill," commented Tom, sarcastically.

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"Ought ter be shovelin' coal or trainin' fer a fight 'stead o' loafin' round an' talkin' 'bout his 'mommer.' Makes me sick!"

In a few minutes the boy returned to his employer.

Almost the first person he saw when he entered the other car was the dude, who was seated by a stylishly-dressed woman of about fifty engaged in earnest conversation—that is, as earnest conversation as he was capable of.

"Do you see that lady over there, Tom?" asked Mr. Maxwell, whose face the boy noticed wore a disturbed look.

"De lady wit de dude?"

"She is my sister."

"Der one yer was tellin' me of, sir?"

"Yes. It is the first time we have been brought face to face for many years, but she would not recognize me."

"I shouldn't t'ink yer'd wanter speak ter her, sir."

"Well, perhaps you are right, Tom, but the ties of blood are strong."

"Is her name Smythe, sir?"

"Yes; how did you know?"

Tom told him of his interview with the dude.

"So that fellow is her son. Well, I should not think she would be proud of him."

"Me neider, sir. Ef he was mine I'd wanter tie a brick around his neck an' chuck him overboard."

Mr. Maxwell did not smile, but leaned back in his seat, stifling a sigh.

"Guess I was too fresh ag'in," muttered Tom. "I've got to look out or I'll git him mad, an' I wouldn't do dat fer anyt'ing."

The old gentleman said but little during the remainder of the journey by rail.

The sight of his sister had evidently produced a depressing effect upon him.

The boat was reached in due time, and Tom was in ecstasies at the sight of the palatial Sound steamer.

And when he was taken into the stateroom he was more delighted than ever.

"Dis is a nifty little room!" he exclaimed. "Are you goin' ter sleep here, Mr. Maxwell?"

"Certainly; and you, too."

"Me?"

"Yes; you can take the upper berth."

"I'd jest as lief sleep out on de deck."

"Nonsense, Tom! And now I guess I'll go down and get a drink."

If the boy had dared he would have asked the old gentleman not to, but he was afraid of offending him, and held his peace.

Mr. Maxwell did not come up to the main deck until long after the boat had started, and then he was considerably under the influence of liquor.

Then he and Tom went down to supper together, and after the meal was over he again returned to the barroom, where he had made several "friends," such as are usually to be found in such resorts.

It was after midnight when he was helped upstairs by a couple of grinning negro waiters and deposited in his berth with his clothes on.

"Got a tur'ble jag," commented one of the darkies.

"He'll be sorry for dis in de mornin'," added the other.

Then they took their leave.

Tom stood and surveyed his unconscious employer with tears in his eyes.

"It's too bad!" he exclaimed, aloud. "Some o' dese days, w'en I knows him better, I'm a-goin' ter give him a temp'rance lecter."

Then he climbed into his own berth without removing his clothes, and soon dropped into a doze.

He was presently awakened by shrieks and cries in the cabin outside.

The room was filled with smoke.

The cabin was crowded with passengers rushing to and fro. In an instant it burst upon Tom that the boat was on fire!

"The steamer is doomed," he heard a man in the cabin say. "They are lowering the boats. We haven't an instant to lose."

Tom sprung from his berth, flung open the door, and seized Mr. Maxwell and dragged him out into the cabin.

But here his strength failed him; he could carry his employer no further.

The wildest confusion reigned.

The passengers were hurrying in all directions, each intent upon saving himself, and no one paid the slightest attention to the appeals of the boy to aid him in removing the unconscious man to a place of safety.

"I'll save him," cried Tom, frantically, "ef I kin; and ef I can't I'll die wid him!"

CHAPTER V.

TOM CARRIES HIS POINT.

Tom was no coward; his life in the streets had taught him courage and self-reliance, but he fully understood the awful peril of his position, and it is no wonder that his cheek blanched and his voice trembled as he made the appeal for help. Help, not for himself, but for the unconscious man who had proved himself his friend, and whose fate he was resolved to share if he could not save him.

He shook Mr. Maxwell violently, he even dashed a pitcher of cold water, which he brought from the stateroom, into his face. But it was all in vain, the old man still lay insensible, the victim of the fatal appetite which he had predicted would some day be the cause of his death.

It seemed as if that day had come.

No one heeded the impassioned cries of the half-frantic boy; in such a time there are but few who think of anything save their own personal safety.

Apparently Mr. Maxwell was doomed.

Tom was abandoning himself to the fate which seemed inevitable when he saw the dude, Gussie Smythe, approaching.

At the same moment he observed the butt of a revolver protruding from Mr. Maxwell's pocket.

An idea, an inspiration, occurred to him.

He seized the revolver and cocked it.

Then, holding it behind him, he addressed the dude, who had by this time reached him, and whose face gave evidence of the utmost terror:

"Hold on, Mr. Smythe."

He grasped the fellow's coat as he spoke, and Smythe had no choice but to pause.

"Ba Jove! What is it, boy?"

"You see Mr. Maxwell, lyin' dere? I want yer ter help me save him."

The dude tried to pull himself away, but our hero held fast.

"Ba Jove!"

"Ba nothing," mimicked our hero, who, even in this hour of supreme peril could not lose his sense of humor. "Don't you see Mr. Maxwell?"

"Ya-as; he's drunk, don'tcher know."

"Suppose he is; is dat any reason why we should leave him here ter die?"

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"I've no time to talk, boy. Let go my coat."

"Not much I won't. Ef yer hain't got time yer kin make it."

By this time the cabin was almost empty.

Nearly every one had reached the boats.

The smoke was growing thicker and thicker, the crackling of the flames was momentarily becoming louder.

Gussie Smythe was frantic with terror.

"Will you let me go or won't you?" he almost screamed.

"No, I won't."

And Tom suddenly produced the revolver and leveled it at the dude's head.

"Hold still, or I'll blow yer brains out!"

There was an expression on the lad's face, a ring in his voice, that told Smythe he meant what he said.

He "held still," exclaiming:

"Ba Jove!"

"Now, yer a big, strappin' feller," went on Tom, "an' yer kin save dis gent ef I can't. It would be easy 'nough fer yer ter pick him up an' take him ter de boats, an' yer a-goin' ter do it, or, by jingo, we'll all die here tergedder."

"Ba Jove!"

But Smythe stood as if paralyzed.

"Now, den, git a move on yer," went on Tom, pressing the weapon against the fellow's temples, "or it'll be de wuss fer yer. Pick de gent up—yer hear me?"

"B-ba Jove!"

But the dude obeyed.

"Now, den, take him ter der boats or it'll be too late. Skip!"

"Ba Jove!"

And the amazed Gussie started off.

"Don't yer drop him, now," added Tom, "or indulge in any funny biz; or I'll put a bullet right t'rough der place w're yer brain orter be. Hurry up!"

Smythe did "hurry up," carrying his unconscious burden in a manner which showed that, while he was unaccustomed to physical exercise he had plenty of muscle if he cared to take the trouble to use it.

And Tom brought up the rear, revolver in hand, all ready to carry out his threat in case the dude showed any evidences of treachery.

Just before they reached the deck where the passengers were being hurried into the boats a lady rushed screaming up to them.

It was Mrs. Smythe, the dude's mother.

"Oh, Gussie, my darling child!" she screamed. "I was so afraid you were burned up."

"Ba Jove!" was her affectionate son's response.

"I missed you when I woke up," she continued. "It can't be," she added quickly, a new idea occurring to her, "that you deserted me—that you meant to leave me to die in the stateroom alone?"

"B-ba Jove!" stammered the dude.

"Who is that man?" she demanded, glancing at Mr. Maxwell. "Why, it's—it's my brother! And you, my heroic boy, are saving his life."

"Heroic nothin'!" interposed Tom, in disgusted accents. "He's doin' it 'cause he can't help hisself."

"Put down that man, Gussie!" commanded Mrs. Smythe.

"Ef he does I'll put an ounce o' lead inter his skull, marm," said Tom, resolutely, and Gussie once more gasped.

"Ba Jove!"

Mrs. Smythe made a rush toward the boy, but retreated before the revolver and our hero's resolute face.

"I wouldn't hurt you, ma'am," said Tom, "fer I see yer've got

more nerve'n yer son has, but Mr. Maxwell's got ter be saved, an' dat's all dere is 'bout it."

"You young villain," snapped Mrs. Smythe, fiercely, "you shall suffer for this!"

"Dat's all right, ma'am," said the boy, calmly. "Get along now, Gussie, ef yer don't want me ter blow off dat pretty bang o' yourn."

Thus stimulated, the dude accelerated his pace, and in a few minutes was, with his companions, in one of the boats.

The other passengers were loud in their praises of Gussie's bravery.

"You are a noble fellow," said one of the gentlemen, pressing the dude's hand warmly as the boat pushed off from the burning steamer.

Gussie would have taken all the credit of saving the unconscious man's life, but Tom interposed.

"It don't make no difference ter me," he said, heedless of Mrs. Smythe's fierce glances, "but he wouldn't ha' strained himself much ter save de gent ef it hadn't been fer dis."

And he exhibited the revolver.

Then he briefly explained the circumstances of Mr. Maxwell's rescue.

Just as the boat reached the shore the ill-fated steamer went down.

More than one valuable life was sacrificed on that memorable night. But that awful catastrophe is a matter of history, and its details need not be repeated here.

The rescued passengers were all safely landed at a little Connecticut village, and nearly all of them went to the one hotel of which the place boasted.

Among the exceptions were Mrs. Symthe and her hopeful son, who found refuge in the house of a wealthy family in the neighborhood with whom they happened to be acquainted.

Mr. Maxwell was borne to a room in the hotel, still unconscious.

"That man," said one of the passengers, a grave-faced, middle-aged man, to Tom, "ought never to touch alcoholic liquors. I am a physician, and I know. I have seen cases like his before, and I know his temperament at glance. If he continues the drink will kill him some day. You ought to warn him, my boy."

"He knows it, sir," replied Tom, sorrowfully, "but he won't stop."

The doctor shook his head.

"It's usually the way," he said. "My boy, you'll lose your friend one of these days, and I'm afraid the day is not very far distant, either."

This prediction saddened Tom very much, and he resolved that he would venture to speak again to his employer, even at the risk of offending him.

Within two hours after the burning of the steamer all the rescued passengers were asleep; but it is safe to say that in the dreams of all of them the stirring scenes of the night were re-enacted.

CHAPTER VI.

TOM FINDS MORE FRIENDS.

It was an hour after sunrise when Mr. Maxwell awoke from his drunken slumber.

He arose in his bed, pressed his hands to his aching temples, and gazed in bewilderment at Tom, who was seated by the window awaiting his return to his senses.

It was evident that he did not at first recognize the boy.

"Oh, it's you, is it Tom?" he presently said, in slow, stammer-

ing accents. "By Jove, what a head I've got on me this mornin'! Why, hold on! Where are we, anyhow? Have I—have I got 'em again, or what's the matter? I thought I went to bed on a Sound steamer, though I don't remember anything about it. What place is this, anyhow, my boy?"

Tom briefly explained what had happened.

Mr. Maxwell asked him a number of excited questions, and was soon in possession of all the facts of the dreadful catastrophe.

"And I owe my life to you, my noble boy!" he exclaimed, in a choking voice.

"Dat's all right, Mr. Maxwell," said the boy. "I didn't do no more fer you dan you'd ha' done fer me, I guess."

"I cannot imagine the positions reversed," said the old gentleman, gravely. "Tom, I have made a beast of myself, and it isn't the first time."

"I hope it'll be der last," the boy ventured to say.

Mr. Maxwell did not hear or did not choose to hear the remark.

"How can I face the other passengers?" he said, bitterly. "Tom, I am not a man who looks upon such an escapade with any degree of pride; I am ashamed of it, more ashamed than perhaps you imagine."

"I should t'ink yer would be, sir," was the boy's blunt reply.

"And you have saved my life," continued Mr. Maxwell. "It is a worthless one, but your bravery is none the less commendable. Is there any way in which I can reward you?"

"Yes, sir, dere is," replied Tom, promptly.

"What is it?"

"I don't t'ink yer'd do it, Mr. Maxwell."

"Why don't you? Ask me any favor that it is in my power to grant and rest assured that I will grant it."

"Do yer mean dat, sir?"

"Of course I do."

"Den I will ask yer a favor."

"Go on."

"Please stop drinkin'."

The old gentleman gazed at our hero for a few moments without speaking, an expression almost of perplexity upon his face.

Then he inquired:

"Why do you ask that favor, Tom?"

"'Cause it's what I want more'n anything else just now, sir."

"But what difference does it make to you, whether I drink or not?"

"Dis much, sir; I like yer; yer my friend, my best friend, an' I don't wanter see yer kill yerself."

Mr. Maxwell uttered a short laugh, but there were tears in his eyes.

"Well, my boy," he said, "I promise."

Tom's face lighted up.

"D'yer mean it, sir?"

"Certainly I do."

"An' yer won't drink no more?"

"I won't—here's my hand on it."

The two clasped hands, and it would be hard to say which was the most moved.

Mr. Maxwell meant what he said, and Tom believed him.

Neither of them, not even the old man who had been a victim of the fatal habit so many years, understood how difficult it was to fight against the appetite for drink once acquired.

"You've done me lots o' good by promisin' dat, Mr. Maxwell," said Tom, as gratefully as if he had been promised some great personal favor.

"That's all right, my boy," laughed the old gentleman; "but I

don't feel that my obligation to you is discharged by any means. I shall show you that I appreciate what you have done."

"I'm satisfied, sir; I don't want nuthin' more."

"We'll settle that point later. And now, Tom!"

"Yes, sir."

"Go down and tell the landlord to send me up a strong cup of coffee. If it hadn't been for you I'd have made it a cocktail."

Tom hastened to obey the order.

As he was on his way back to Mr. Maxwell's room, a gentleman, who was one of a group seated on the piazza, hailed him:

"Young man, come here a moment, will you?"

The boy stepped out.

"Well, how's that drunken old employer of yours this morning?" continued his interlocutor, rather coarsely.

Tom's face reddened.

Involuntarily he clinched his fists.

"I don't allow no one ter speak o' Mr. Maxwell that way," he said.

The men all roared with laughter, and the one who had spoken before, said:

"Well, that's right, my lad; I like your spunk. You seem a good deal attached to the old gentleman. You must have worked for him a long time?"

"I seen him fer the fust time day before yesterday," replied our hero.

"Is that so?"

"Yes; but he's been square wid me, an' I'm goin' ter be wid him."

"So you ought, and I like you for it. He must be a good fellow to command such devotion. But never mind about him just now. We've been talking about you, Tom—that's your name, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"And we've decided to ask you to do us a favor."

"What is it, sir?" asked Tom, wonderingly.

"I'll tell you. Just before you came downstairs we took up a collection for your benefit, and realized a few dollars, which we want you to accept."

"What fer?" inquired the boy, bewildered by the suggestion.

"Why, don't you understand, my lad, that we want to give it to you as a little token of our esteem on account of your noble conduct last night."

Tom's face colored again.

"I'm much obliged, gents," he said, "but I can't take it."

"You can't take it? Why not?"

"Because—because I don't do dat kind o' t'ing fer money."

"Of course you don't," laughed the gentleman. "We're not giving it to you to pay you, but to show our appreciation of what you have done."

"I much obliged," replied Tom, "but I can't take it. I hain't done nothin' ter earn it, an' I don't—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted the gentleman, good-naturedly, thrusting a roll of bills into the boy's pocket. "We appreciate your feelings, but we appreciate your courage, too, and we are not willing to allow it to go unrewarded. Now, then, say no more about it. The money'll come handy some time, no doubt, and you're more than welcome to it. Take my card, too, and if you ever need a friend come to me."

"Take mine, too!"

"And mine!"

"And mine!"

In a few moments Tom was in possession of a dozen or more cards, and the congratulations which he received with them fairly overwhelmed him.

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As he started to go upstairs again he heard one of the gentlemen say:

"By Jove! that little chap is one boy in a thousand!"

"Don't see dat I done any'ing ter make all dat fuss about," soliloquized our hero. "I guess dem gents must have more money dan dey know w'at ter do wid."

He took the roll of bills from his pocket and counted them, and was astonished to find that there were two hundred dollars.

"I don't t'ink I orter take dis," he mused. "I'll see w'at Mr. Maxwell says."

He found his employer drinking his coffee.

"I tell you what, my boy," the old gentleman said, "it takes more nerve than you perhaps imagine to deny myself that cocktail this morning. But I'm going to keep my word to you if I can."

"Of course yer kin," said Tom.

And then he went on to tell Mr. Maxwell about the money he had received, and to ask his advice as to whether he ought to keep it or not.

"Of course you must keep it," said the gentleman, promptly; "and, to my way of thinking, you earned it and a good deal more. Don't think of giving it back."

"All right, sir—jest as you say. But I don't know w'at ter do wid it."

"You don't?"

"No, sir. Will you keep it fer me?"

"Certainly, if you wish. Shall I put it in the savings bank?"

"Yes, sir," and Tom's face brightened up, "I'd be much obliged ef yer would. I'd like ter salt down a little money fer a rainy day."

Mr. Maxwell laughed heartily as he put the roll of bills in his pocket.

"You're an original, Tom."

"W'at's dat, sir?"

"Well, never mind. Go downstairs and try to get me a N. Y. & N. H. time-table. I want to get back to the city as soon as I can."

"All right, sir."

The time-table was procured; and before noon our hero and his employer were in the metropolis.

CHAPTER VII.

A HARD BLOW FOR TOM.

Tom was simply astounded at the grandeur of Mr. Maxwell's New York home.

It was a large, old-fashioned brick mansion in the lower part of the city; a neighborhood that had been fashionable in bygone days, and to which a few of the old families still cling.

They were admitted by a servant in livery, who, to Tom's astonishment, took his hat and coat and ushered him into the drawing-room with a profound bow.

Mr. Maxwell watched his *protégé* in evident amusement.

"Well," he asked, "what do you think of it? How do you like the house?"

"It's boss" replied the boy, emphatically.

"Why don't you sit down?" laughed the gentleman.

"What, on dem?" asked Tom, indicating the elegant damask chairs.

"Of course; they were made to sit upon," replied Mr. Maxwell, with another laugh.

"I s'pose dey was," and Tom seated himself in a very gingerly manner. "But hadn't I better go down inter de kitchen?"

Mr. Maxwell stared at him almost angrily.

"Into the kitchen? for what?"

"I dunno," replied Tom, somewhat vaguely; "only I s'pose I orter git acquainted wid de odder servants."

"The other servants!" repeated the old gentleman. "See here, Tom," he went on, after a pause, "I don't think you quite understand your position in this house. You are not a servant."

It was Tom's turn to stare.

"W'at am I, den, sir?"

"You are my adopted son."

"Y—your w—what, Mr. Maxwell?" gasped the amazed boy.

"My adopted son," reiterated his patron. "Tom, I like you, and I have from the moment of our first meeting. You have done me the greatest service that one person can do another. I am alone in the world, even my own flesh and blood have turned against me—but I have told you all that. I am under obligations to you, but it is not on that account that I want to call you my son, it is because I like you. Now, then, what do you say?"

"Dat yer ter good ter me," replied Tom, in tremulous accents.

"That's all right," said the brusque old man. "Then, it's settled, and you may as well go to your room."

As he spoke he touched a bell upon the table at his elbow, and a servant almost instantly entered.

"William," said the old gentleman, "this is my adopted son, Master Thomas. Show him to the blue room, which will be his, and obey whatever orders he may give you. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

And the well-trained servant, not manifesting the slightest surprise at this sudden appearance upon the scene of an heir to the Maxwell estate, bowed Tom out of the room.

"Is dis me, or is it somebody else, or am I a-dreamin'?" soliloquized the boy when he was alone in the elegant blue room. "Guess I shall wake up bimeby—it can't be reel!"

And he half believed what he said.

But it was "reel," as he soon found out. His new life was a wonderful change from the old, but the boy adapted himself to its requirements with remarkable ease.

He attended school regularly, and devoted himself to his studies with characteristic energy.

His improvement was a matter of astonishment to Mr. Maxwell.

In a very short time he had gotten rid of his "tough" street dialect, which he found made him the butt of the other boys, and his entire manner and appearance underwent a marked change.

Four months passed. At the end of this period Mr. Maxwell had promised Tom that he would take him to Europe, also taking a tutor to continue Tom's education while he traveled.

The day of the proposed departure for Europe of Tom and his new-found father was almost at hand.

Tickets had been purchased, a stateroom engaged, a tutor secured for Tom, and all preparations for the journey made.

The boy was in ecstasies at the prospect of a tour of Europe, and Mr. Maxwell was in almost as high spirits himself.

"I'm going to spend the evening with a few friends," he said, as he put on his hat after dinner on the evening preceding the day of their intended departure. "I may not be back very early, so don't sit up for me, Tom."

As our hero listened to these words a strange presentiment of evil seized him; but he banished the feeling as absurd.

It was nearly three o'clock in the morning when the old gentleman returned. Tom heard him stumbling upstairs, and his heart sunk; he knew that Mr. Maxwell had broken his promise not to drink again.

They were to start for the steamer at eight o'clock; at seven Tom went to Mr. Maxwell's door and knocked.

There was no response, but the boy heard an incoherent muttering inside the room.

Alarmed, he knocked again and again, but received no reply. While he was thus engaged the servant, William, appeared upon the scene.

"It isn't any use, Master Thomas," he said, with a grim smile; "I've often seen him that way before. He'll sleep till he gets ready to wake up, Europe or no Europe, and you may as well let him alone."

"But don't you hear him talking in there?" cried Tom, impatiently.

The man listened.

"Oh, he's only talking in his sleep," he finally said.

"Nonsense!" responded Tom, quickly. "He is sick. Let us burst open the door."

"Do you mean it, Master Tom?"

"Of course I do."

"Well, it's plain enough that you never saw Mr. Maxwell when he had a jag on. He's always this way. Better leave him alone and let him sleep it off."

For a moment the boy hesitated. Then he said:

"No, burst open the door; I'll take the responsibility."

The stalwart fellow put his shoulder to the door, the lock flew off, and the next moment the two stood inside the room.

As the servant's eyes rested upon his master a change came over his features.

Mr. Maxwell's eyes were wide open, and rested upon the two intruders with a vacant stare.

His face was flushed, and he was muttering unintelligibly.

Tom rushed up to him.

"Mr. Maxwell—father," he cried, "don't you know me?"

There was no response.

"Won't you speak to me?" continued the boy with growing excitement, as he placed his hand upon the old man's head.

But Mr. Maxwell did not appear to hear the words, his eyes gazed vacantly into those of our hero.

"He's a sick man, Master Thomas," interposed William, gently. "I've seen cases like his before—I used to be a nurse in a hospital once. You'd better send for a doctor, sir, I think."

"Of course, of course," cried Tom, hastily. "Go for one at once, William."

A few minutes later the physician—whom Tom had met several times before—was at Mr. Maxwell's bedside.

He looked very grave as he turned to the boy.

"Your father," he said, "is a very sick man."

"Is—is it very serious?" asked Tom, in choking accents. "Will he live?"

"He has the attack that I have feared for many months," replied the doctor. "He is suffering from congestion of the brain, brought on by excessive indulgence in alcohol. He may live, but, to be frank with you, I doubt it."

"You doubt it!" gasped the boy.

"Yes; if I am not wrong, he has but a few hours to live."

The physician was not wrong. In less than twelve hours Mr. Maxwell died without having regained consciousness, and Tom was once more alone in the world.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SERIOUS ACCUSATION.

At first our hero was fairly stupefied with grief at the loss of his friend.

Had Mr. Maxwell really been his father his devotion could not have been greater.

"He seems dazed-like," said William to the housekeeper, "but when Mrs. Smythe comes she'll wake him up, poor fellow!"

"Do you think that woman will dare enter this house?" asked Mrs. Wilson, the old lady who had served Mr. Maxwell as housekeeper for many years.

"Do I think she will, ma'am? I know it. As soon as she hears of her brother's death she'll come and take possession."

"I don't know but you're right, William. But she won't hold possession long."

"Why not, ma'am?"

"Because Mr. Maxwell has made a will leaving everything to Master Thomas."

Mrs. Wilson's prediction was realized. Before sunset on the day of Mr. Maxwell's death, his sister and her promising son appeared upon the scene.

Attired in the deepest mourning, Mrs. Smythe rushed into the parlor crying:

"Where is he?—where is my poor brother? Oh, this is dreadful, dreadful!"

"B-ba Jove!" stammered Gussie, who had a crape band about six inches wide on his hat.

"Mr. Maxwell's body is upstairs, ma'am," replied William. "Do you wish to see it?"

"Do I wish to see it? Of course I do. Show me to the room at once."

Just at this moment Tom came downstairs.

As the woman's eyes rested upon his face the expression of her features changed.

"Out of this house, you young ragamuffin," she hissed. "I am mistress here now!"

"Not yet," said a quiet voice behind her.

And turning, she found herself face to face with Mrs. Wilson, the gentle old housekeeper.

"What do you mean, woman?" she demanded, haughtily.

"I mean," was the reply, "that it was Mr. Maxwell's intention to make Master Thomas his heir, and that I believe he has done so."

"Oh, you do, do you?" snapped Mrs. Smythe. "Well, we shall see. I suppose," she added, sarcastically, "you will not object to allowing me to remain in the house until after my brother's funeral?"

"Certainly not, madam."

"You are very good, I am sure. One would imagine that you were mistress here instead of I."

"I do not think that either of us enjoys that distinction, Mrs. Smythe."

"Oh, you don't! Well, in a few days I shall try to prove to you that you are mistaken. And as for this boy—"

"As for me, ma'am," interposed Tom, very quietly, "I think it my duty to remain here until it is decided who is the owner of the property."

"Ba Jove!" exclaimed the dude, "did you heah that, mamma?"

"I did, indeed, Gussie. So you persist in remaining in my house in defiance of my will, do you?"

"When I know that it is your house," said the boy, "you will not have to tell me twice to go. In the meantime I shall endeavor to keep out of your way as much as possible."

"Do so Gussie!" turning fiercely to her son.

"Yes, mamma?"

"Why don't you put him out?"

"B-ba Jove!" stammered Gussie, but he made no attempt to obey his mother's wishes.

Mr. Maxwell's funeral was attended by a large number of

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friends, but there was no sincerer mourner than the friendless boy to whom the dead man had been so kind a benefactor.

That evening Mr. Maxwell's lawyer called and held a long consultation with Mrs. Smythe, in which Tom was permitted to take part.

This lawyer was a man whom Tom felt he could trust. He had been Mr. Maxwell's life-long friend, and had always shown a kindly feeling toward our hero.

"I do not believe," he said, "that your foster father made a will. Had he done so he would certainly have employed me to draw it up, and I am not aware of the existence of such a document. I think I can assure you that he died infestate, and that Mrs. Smythe is his heiress."

"Of course I am," said the woman, a ring of triumph in her voice. "Now, boy, leave my house!"

"You surely would not turn the lad out as you would a dog?" interrupted the old lawyer.

"Yes, I would. Let him go back to the streets where my brother found him."

Tom arose.

"I will go," he said. "You shall not have to tell me again, Mrs. Smythe."

At this moment Gussie appeared upon the threshold, a stout, elderly man behind him.

"W-wait!" he exclaimed.

"Gussie, my dear child, what is it?" cried Mrs. Smythe. "Who is this gentleman?"

Tom could not help fancying that both mother and son were playing parts.

"He's a d-d-detective, ba Jove!" replied the dude.

"A detective, Gussie?"

"Yes, mamma. I've been robbed, don'tcher know."

"Robbed, my darling. Of what?"

"My w-w-watch, don'tcher know, and my d-d-diamond scarf-pin."

"Is it possible? And by whom?"

"B-by that b-boy," indicating Tom.

"It's a lie," exclaimed the amazed boy, "and you know it."

"W-well, I s-suspect yaw, atyhow, and I demand that yaw room be s-searched."

"Search it and welcome," said Tom, promptly. "I will not leave this house until my innocence is established."

"Which it will be, I am certain," said the old lawyer.

"Thank you, sir," returned Tom, gratefully.

All proceeded at once to the boy's room. Tom handed his keys to the lawyer, who unlocked and opened the trunk.

Upon the top lay the missing watch and chain and several other articles of jewelry belonging to Mrs. Smythe.

"D-didn't I t-tell yaw so?" demanded Gussie, triumphantly.

"I never put those articles in there!" cried Tom. "This is a vile plot."

"You are my prisoner, boy," said the detective, stepping forward and placing his hand on the boy's shoulder.

"Hold on a minute," said a coarse voice behind them, "I've got a word to say about this business."

Turning, they found themselves confronted by a red-faced, showily-dressed woman of about twenty-five.

"Who are you?" demanded Mrs. Smythe.

"Who am I? I'm Mrs. Maxwell, the widow of Thomas Maxwell, and the mistress of this house—that's who I am," was the composed reply.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TABLES TURNED.

Every one stared at the newcomer in speechless amazement. The woman seemed to hugely enjoy the sensation she had produced.

"Yes," she went on with a light laugh, "it's just so. I am Mrs. Thomas Maxwell, and you, madam, have the honor of being my sister-in-law. But I don't care particularly about cultivating your acquaintance. So, if you please, you can just step out of the house—not only you, but your chump of a son, and this boy," indicating Tom. "In a word, all of you."

"B-ba Jove!" stammered Gussie.

"Miserable woman," gasped Mrs. Smythe, with rage, "leave this house!"

"Ha, ha!" laughed the newcomer. "Oh, no, I guess not."

"You claim that you are Mr. Thomas Maxwell's widow?" interposed the old lawyer, with a searching glance into the newcomer's face.

"No one knew that Mr. Maxwell was married."

"No; we kept the marriage secret for reasons of our own."

"What are your proofs of this claim?"

"My marriage certificate, for one thing."

And the woman drew a folded paper from her pocket and handed it to the lawyer.

He scanned it closely.

"It appears perfectly regular," he said.

"Oh, it's all straight—don't you worry about that, my friend."

"Let me see it!" hissed Mrs. Smythe, with a malignant glance at the stranger.

The lawyer handed the paper to Mrs. Smythe.

"I've heard of the clergyman," said she, half to herself.

"Why have you not lived with your husband?" she asked.

"Oh, we had our reasons for living apart—what they were are none of your business. And now, Mrs. Smythe, I'll trouble you to get out—skip—leave the house. Do you understand English?"

"Ba Jove!" interpolated Gussie, feebly, as he cast a hopeless glance at his mother.

"Don't stir, Gussie," said Mrs. Smythe, fiercely. "I'll dispose of this woman in short order."

"You cahn't, don'tcher know," returned her hopeful son.

"Hold on!" interrupted Mrs. Maxwell, turning to the dude. "I forgot about you. I've a little account to settle with you."

"B-ba Jove!" stammered Gussie.

"Yes, 'ba Jove!" mimicked the woman; "you accuse this boy here of stealing that jewelry, do you?"

"Ya-as, don'tcher know."

"Well, you're a liar. You put those things in his trunk yourself—I saw you do it—I and the servant who let me in. I've been here some time reconnoitering, and I was hiding in the hall when you hid the things in the trunk."

"B-b-ba Jove!" stammered Gussie, his face turning very pale.

"It is false!" hissed Mrs. Smythe.

"No, it ain't false, neither, and if I'm not mistaken you were in the plot, too. Now, I may not be a very fine lady, but I'm too straight for a dirty trick like that, and I'm going to stand by the boy. Arrest him if you dare; I will appear in court and tell all I know."

"I—I won't arrest him, don'tcher know," said the terrified Gussie. "I'm s-s-s-sorry I did it—ba Jove I am!"

"So you confess it, do you?" said the detective with a look of disgust.

"Ya-as, don'tcher know."

"Fool!" hissed Mrs. Smythe.

"That's about what he is," said Mrs. Maxwell.

"Well, that's about the smallest trick I ever heard of," said the detective in a tone of intense disgust. "If you want to make a complaint against this fellow"—addressing Tom—"I'll arrest him on the spot."

"Let him go," said our hero. "He isn't worth the trouble."

"Well, I guess you're about right." And the officer left the room.

Mrs. Smythe gave Tom an ugly glance.

"You'll repent this some day," she said.

"It ought not to be necessary for me to remind you, Mrs. Smythe," said the lawyer, "that such remarks are in decidedly poor taste."

Mrs. Smythe glared at him a moment; then she turned to Mrs. Maxwell, and said:

"May I request a private interview with you?"

"You may but you won't get it," was the prompt reply. "I've no time to fool away with you."

Mrs. Smythe bent a piercing glance upon her face.

"If you do not accord me this interview," she said, "you will regret it as long as you live."

There was something in her tone that evidently impressed the woman.

For a few moments she was silent, then she said:

"Well, you've made me curious, so step into the next room and I'll hear what you have to say."

"What does all this mean?" said Tom to the lawyer, as the two women left the room.

"I don't know," was the reply in a low tone, inaudible to Gussie, who stood the picture of bewilderment, "but of one thing I am sure, there is some rascally plot afoot. We must watch and wait, and be ready to take decisive measures should occasion require."

The two women were absent perhaps a quarter of an hour.

When they returned it was evident to Tom and the lawyer at a glance that the condition of affairs had changed.

Mrs. Smythe's face wore a triumphant look, while her companion's had a decidedly crestfallen appearance.

"Mrs. Maxwell has invited us to remain here as her guests for an indefinite period, Gussie," the former said, quietly.

And the dude replied with his inevitable:

"Ba Jove!"

"And as for you," turning to Tom, "you can leave the house. Is not that your desire, Mrs. Maxwell?"

"It is," replied the woman; "the sooner he gets out, the better I shall be pleased."

Tom was about to reply, but the lawyer checked him with a look and said:

"We are going at once, good-morning."

And, followed by Tom, he left the room.

CHAPTER X.

AN INIQUITOUS AGREEMENT.

When they were alone together, Mrs. Smythe turned to her companion and demanded passionately:

"How did you get into this house, woman?"

"I walked in. One of the servants who knows me, and is also aware that I am her mistress, let me in; and I stood listening to your talk for quite a little while before I spoke. Is that all you've got to say?"

"I have several questions to ask you."

"Well, I don't feel much like being cross-examined in my own house by an outsider."

"An outsider!" cried Mrs. Smythe.

"Yes, an outsider. I am the owner of this house, and you are only here on sufferance."

"You think so, do you?"

"I know so."

"Well, you are very much mistaken."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you do not own this property any more than I do."

"Aha! you confess that you don't own it, then, eh, Mrs. Smythe?" demanded the woman, quickly.

"I don't mind doing so since there are no witnesses. But you are not mistress here, either."

"What's the reason I'm not?"

"Because my brother did not die intestate. He made a will only two months before he died."

"Do you know what you are talking about, Mrs. Smythe?" cried the visitor, excitedly.

"I do."

"Where is this will?"

"In my possession."

"And how does it dispose of the property?"

"It leaves every penny to that boy, who is his adopted son."

"I don't believe it!" exclaimed the woman, her face paling.

"Don't you? Well, here is the document."

And Mrs. Smythe produced a paper from her pocket and held it before her companion's eyes.

The woman made an attempt to seize it, but Mrs. Smythe drew it back quickly.

"I'll retain it in my possession, if you please," she said, with a sarcastic smile. "When I give it up it will not be to you."

"Where did you get it?" asked Mrs. Maxwell, with a glance full of hatred.

"I found it in my brother's desk since I have been in this house. It was drawn up by a strange lawyer, evidently, for the one who just left us knows nothing of its existence."

"Well, why have you shown it to me?" demanded the woman.

"To prove to you that it is in my power to take every penny of his property away from you."

"Well, you have proved it—what now?"

And Mrs. Maxwell stared defiantly into her companion's face.

"I shall produce the will unless you are willing to agree to certain terms which I shall impose."

"Ah! so you want to talk business, do you?"

"Yes."

If a look could have killed Mrs. Smythe's would have done so.

"Well," she added, endeavoring to stifle her rage, "what do you propose?"

"I'll be more liberal than you," replied Mrs. Maxwell. "Suppose we divide evenly?"

Mrs. Smythe reflected a few moments, then she said:

"Very well I agree."

"And the will must be destroyed."

"It shall not be. Were I to destroy it I should destroy my only hold on you. No, madam, I shall retain possession of that document."

After some discussion Mrs. Smythe carried her point.

"And now," she said, "since it is all settled, will you go?"

"Go? leave this house? Not much. I am mistress here, and I shall remain."

"And I, too," added Mrs. Smythe, firmly.

"Want to keep me under your eye, do you?" laughed her companion. "All right. Now, then, what's the use of our being on bad terms? You're a smart woman and I'm another. There's something about you that I kind of like—that is, when you don't

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indulge in too many lugs. You stay right here, and that booby son of yours, too; I can stand him if you can. Just make yourself at home. After we've made your little divvy I may travel, and then you'll have to get out, but for the present you can stay and welcome."

It was with difficulty that Mrs. Smythe, whose instincts and training inclined toward refinement and ultra-fastidiousness, concealed her disgust at the coarseness of her companion.

But she succeeded in doing so, and replied:

"So be it, madam; the arrangement will suit me."

CHAPTER XI.

THE VOYAGE AND ITS ENDING.

"What do you mean to do now, Tom?" asked the old lawyer, as they walked in the direction of Broadway.

"I don't know, sir," replied the boy. "I haven't formed any plans yet."

"Well, I have a proposition to make to you, my boy."

"A proposition, sir?"

"Yes. Mr. Maxwell has told me a good deal about you, and what he has said has given me a very high opinion of you. He used to say that you were one boy in a thousand, and I am inclined to believe that he was right. Now, you're just the sort of a boy that I want in my office, I fancy, and I'll give you a position there at ten dollars a week, with a good prospect of advancement, if you'll accept it. What do you say?"

Tom hesitated; his color came and went.

He did not wish to seem ungrateful to the kind-hearted lawyer, and yet he had ambitions widely different from those suggested by the old gentleman's well-meant offer.

Observing his hesitation and embarrassment, his companion said:

"Speak out, Tom. If you don't like the idea, say so."

"I'm very much obliged to you, sir," almost stammered the boy, "but, to tell the truth, I don't quite like it."

"Why not?"

"Because—well, sir, because I want to travel."

The old gentleman's brow darkened.

"To travel? Travel is a luxury; it is only for the rich."

"I don't think so, sir. I think a man may travel cheaply."

"Well, I'll tell you what to do. You come home with me, and spend a day or two in my house. To-night we will have a talk about this matter, and I'll see if I can't convince you that you'd better give up this idea of traveling, and buckle down to business. Will you go?"

"Certainly, sir; and I'm very much obliged to you for the invitation," replied Tom, who had been contemplating the prospect of going to a hotel with dread.

"Not at all; and I have strong hopes of being able to argue you out of this notion, which seems absurd in the extreme to me. I am a lawyer, and I shall use all my powers, I warn you."

But the old gentleman did not succeed.

"Well," said the lawyer, after a long argument with Tom, "since you are determined upon this foolhardy scheme, I'll do what I can to help you, and I'll go to the steamer to wish you godspeed."

The next fortnight was spent in preparations.

He did not, however, select the most expensive line, and the cost was no more than he felt that he ought to afford.

The reader will remember that the passengers of the ill-fated Sound steamer had presented him with about two hundred dollars, and Mr. Maxwell had nearly doubled the amount, so he was quite well supplied with funds.

The old lawyer was not idle during the fortnight.

He made searching inquiries as to Mr. Maxwell's marriage with Nancy Graham, as the woman's name proved to be, and found that it had really taken place.

The clergyman who had solemnized it stated that Mr. Maxwell appeared to be somewhat under the influence of liquor at the time of the ceremony, but not sufficiently so to justify him in refusing to marry the couple.

The woman, Nancy Graham, was undoubtedly an adventuress, but that she was legally Mr. Maxwell's widow, and mistress of his property, there seemed no reason to doubt.

"You can only do as I said—watch and wait," said the lawyer to Tom. "Things may right themselves, though it is more than likely that the end has come, so far as you are concerned, and that this woman will have to be left in undisturbed possession of the property which I know my poor friend Maxwell meant should be yours."

"I have no hope of anything else," replied the boy, "and am satisfied."

"But I'm not!" said the lawyer, heatedly. "It's rank injustice, but it can't be helped, I suppose."

The morning of Tom's departure came at last.

The lawyer and several of our hero's friends came to see him off.

The scene was one of such bustle and excitement as always attend the sailing of an ocean steamer, and Tom's heart beat high as he surveyed the hurrying crowds, and watched the preparations for departure.

At last the cry of "All ashore!" was heard, and the many friends of the voyagers hurried away.

"God bless you, Tom," said the old gentleman, pressing our hero's hand. "I still maintain my opinion that it's a foolish enterprise, but I wish you the best of luck, just the same. Hello! Who's this?"

Tom looked in the direction indicated, and was surprised and chagrined to see Gussie Smythe hurrying up the gangplank, ejaculating:

"Ba Jove!"

"So you're going to have him for a fellow-passenger, eh?" said the old man. "Well, that's hard luck; I'm sorry for you. He was almost too late—it's a pity he did not miss the steamer. Well, good-by, once more, by boy."

And the lawyer hurried away, brushing past Gussie in the most unceremonious manner possible, not paying the slightest attention to his indignant:

"B-ba Jove!"

The next moment the gangplank was lowered, and the vessel moved majestically out into the stream.

At last Tom was on his travels.

But the joy with which his heart was beating, as he waved his handkerchief to his friends on the wharf, was alloyed by the remembrance of his more than father, with whom he had hoped to enjoy the journey that was now before him, and, as he took a last look at his native land, his eyes were dimmed with tears.

While standing buried in thought that was at once painful and pleasurable, he felt a touch upon his shoulder.

Turning quickly, he found himself face to face with Gussie Smythe:

"Ba Jove!" said the dude, with a sickly grin, as he removed his cane from his mouth.

"What do you want?" asked Tom, unceremoniously.

"W-we're not b-bad friends, I hope, deah boy?" said Gussie. "Mamma made me do it, don'tcher know. I'm going ovah to see

the othaw side, and, if yaw like, we can call b-bygones b-bygones."

"Well, I don't like," said Tom, emphatically. "I want nothing to do with you."

And he walked away, leaving the amazed Gussie sucking his cane industriously, and exclaiming:

"Ba Jove!"

Tom found that his roommate was a young fellow, only a year or two older than himself, named Vinton.

He was a rather fine-looking young man, but there were unmistakable marks of dissipation on his face.

"I guess we shall get along together first-rate," he said to our hero. "I like your looks, and I don't think you'll find me a bad fellow. I've led a rough life, and done a good many things that I ought not to have done; but I don't think I'm exactly a bad sort at heart. I have a fair income, and am traveling for fun. And now you have my biography in a nutshell. I don't ask for yours—you can tell me what you please, and when you please. Let's have a drink."

But Tom quietly refused, for he had made up his mind never to touch intoxicating liquor.

His companion only laughed, good-naturedly, and said:

"All right; just as you say. Perhaps you're right."

The voyage was marked with one or two events which we must now relate.

It was the custom of a number of the gentlemen passengers to spend their evenings in the cardroom—as on most Atlantic steamers—a good deal of gambling was done, and a good deal of money changed hands.

One evening Tom accompanied Vinton to the cardroom, and sat for some time watching the game—he would not play himself.

Vinton had been drinking all the evening, as had most of the men in the room and was considerably excited by his losses, which were heavy.

Suddenly he flung down his cards, exclaiming:

"I've always heard that there was hardly a square game played on these steamers, and now I know it!"

His opponent, a thick-set young man of twenty-four or five, sprang to his feet, shouting:

"Do you mean to accuse me of swindling you?"

"That's just what I do!" promptly replied Vinton.

Instantly the other drew a revolver from his pocket, and leveled it at the young fellow's head.

In a moment Tom had sprung to his feet, and given the would-be assassin's elbow a hard knock.

The weapon was discharged, and the bullet lodged in the ceiling.

The next instant the gambler was seized and disarmed.

"You have saved my life!" cried Vinton, grasping Tom's hand, when quiet was restored. "How can I reward you?"

Tom only laughed, and tried to pass the matter off lightly.

But his companion insisted.

"Some day I may be able to be of service to you, and, if I am, you'll find me ready, my boy."

He little imagined when he spoke what a great service he would be able to render Tom one day.

This event occurred on the day the vessel reached Liverpool.

When the gangplank was lowered, Tom and Vinton were almost the first persons on shore.

But as our hero's feet touched terra-firma, a heavy hand was laid on his shoulder, and a harsh voice said:

"Young man, you're my prisoner. Take it quiet now, or it'll be so much the worse for you."

CHAPTER XII.

GUSSIE SHOWS FIGHT.

Tom stared at the man in amazement.

"What do you mean?" he stammered. "Who are you?"

"What I mean is plain enough," was the reply; "and, as for who I am, I'm a detective from Scotland Yard."

"And you arrest me?" demanded the still bewildered boy.

"That's what I said; come along, now; we can't stand here all day."

"There must be some mistake," interposed Vinton, at this remark.

"What have you got to say about it?" asked the officer, surlily.

"Just this—that I know you've made a mistake."

"Oh, you do?"

"Yes."

Just then a tall, plainly-dressed man came up to the detective, and asked, with an air of authority which plainly showed that he was the other's superior in rank:

"Is this the boy?"

"Yes, sir," was the respectful answer.

"You are sure?"

"Oh, yes; don't you see that he answers the description, sir?"

"No more than this other young man does," indicating Vinton.

"Oh, I've got the right one, sir," said the detective, positively.

"No, you haven't," interrupted Tom. "Who do you take me for?"

"For Tony Rawson, the young assistant cashier of the _____ Bank, New York, who sailed on this steamer on the seventeenth, with ten thousand dollars of the bank's funds."

"Well," laughed Tom, "you never made a bigger mistake in your life. I don't believe the fellow was on the ship at all."

"Yes, he was."

"Well, I am not he."

"You have made a mistake, Johnson," interposed the elder officer.

"He has made a mistake," said Vinton, quietly. "As I told him, I know the boy to be innocent."

"How do you know?"

"Because I am Tony Rawson."

"You!"

And both officers, as well as Tom, stared at the young fellow in amazement.

It seemed unaccountable that he should confess himself the fugitive when he had so good an opportunity to make his escape.

Perhaps he read their thoughts, for he said:

"This young man, Tom Woods, saved my life a day or two ago, and I'm not going to let him suffer for my crime."

He spoke with evident feeling, and Tom could not help being affected.

"I am sincerely sorry," he began, grasping the young man's hand.

"That's all right," interrupted Vinton, with a light laugh that grated upon the boy. "It's best as it is—the way of the transgressor, you know, and all that sort of thing. I should have been nabbed sooner or later, anyhow. Good-by, Tom, and take warning by me."

And he turned abruptly, and walked away with the two officers. This episode dampened our hero's spirits not a little.

He had learned to like Vinton, and this sudden and unexpected discovery that he was a criminal, a thief, pained him greatly.

He decided that, after a few hours spent in visiting the various points of interest in Liverpool, he would take the train for London.

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His sojourn in Liverpool was, however, somewhat longer than he intended, for he found so much that was new, strange, and interesting that he remained nearly three days in the city.

He lived in the most economical way possible, occupying rooms in a cheap lodging house, and getting his meals wherever he happened to be at the time and whenever he happened to feel hungry.

He left Liverpool by the four-thirty P. M. express on the afternoon of the third day of his stay in the city.

The only other passenger in the compartment with him was a handsome, aristocratic-looking young lady, perhaps a year older than himself.

She was plainly, yet very elegantly, dressed, and Tom could not help gazing admiringly upon her.

Soon after the train started, seeing that she had nothing to read, he ventured to offer her one of the two books which he happened to have with him.

But she replied:

"No, thank you, sir."

And the look that accompanied the words said, plainly enough: "The idea of such presumption!"

Tom was frozen out.

He felt mortified, for his feelings toward the young lady had been of the most respectful nature, and he had only hoped to be able to relieve the tedium of her journey to some extent.

"She's one of the aristocracy, I'll bet," he meditated, as he concealed his face behind his book. "Perhaps she thinks I was trying to 'mash' her. Maybe I was a little too fresh. Well, I can see that what 'goes' in America doesn't 'go' here, so I'll be more careful the next time."

He would have liked to enter into conversation with his fair fellow-passenger, and ask her some questions about the various points of interest they were passing, but her aristocratic nose was still turned upward, and he did not care to take the risk of another rebuff.

But it was hard work for the active, go-ahead Tom to keep quiet.

He finished his book, and glanced at his watch; it was only five-forty-five.

And the train was not due in London until nine-forty.

"Confound these English railway arrangements!" he muttered. "If I were in America, I'd be in a car with fifty other people, who would tell me all I want to know, but here I am locked up with 'his high-toned girl,' who feels insulted if I even offer her a book. I wish somebody else would come along."

He caught the young lady's eyes at that moment, and fancied that she was gazing at him with an appearance of some interest.

But her look was quickly averted, and her face assumed the same cold, forbidding expression as before.

Tom saw her looking again, a few minutes later; and this time he nearly yawned in her face.

He was getting sleepy; within a minute or two he was in "the land of nod," and snoring, perhaps, in a manner most discourteous to his fair companion.

Perhaps two hours later, he was awakened by a scream.

He opened his eyes, and started to his feet at the same moment.

At first he thought that the sight which met his gaze was only a part of the dream from which he had just been awakened.

He beheld the young lady opposite him struggling in the arms of a stylishly-dressed man, and heard these words:

"B-ba Jove! Yaw won't refuse me a little kiss, now, will yaw, my deah?"

The voice was that of Gussie Smythe.

Yes, the new passenger was no other.

Tom seized the dude by the shoulder.

"Release that young lady, you villain!"

Gussie turned an angry look upon him—a look unlike anything he had seen upon the dude's face before, and revealing a different side of his nature.

"Say, boy yaw'd better keep quiet, don'tcher know."

"Will you let that young lady go?"

"No, I won't, ba Jove! Yaw haven't got yaw pistol this time, ma boy, and I'm more than a match for yaw."

CHAPTER XIII.

NEW FRIENDS FOR TOM.

The young lady turned an appealing look upon Tom.

Her dignity and reserve were all gone; it was evident that she was pretty badly frightened.

And no wonder, for it was also evident that Gussie, having released himself from his mamma's apron-strings, had been drinking, and was rapidly developing into something worse than a mere dude.

When had the dude boarded the train? Our hero had seen nothing of him since he had left the steamer, and had supposed that he had left Liverpool, which was probably the case.

It was likely that he had entered the compartment at some way station while Tom was asleep.

Paying no more attention to our hero, Gussie turned again to the terrified girl, saying:

"Now, then, me little beauty—aw—one kiss, don'tcher know. Yaw cahn't refuse that, ba Jove! Yaw cahn't be so heartless!"

Again the young lady struggled to free herself from the dude, whose arm encircled her waist, and turned her large, blue eyes once more in mute appeal to Tom.

The boy could stand no more.

He laid his hand—by no means gently—once more upon Gussie's shoulder.

"See here, didn't you hear what I told you, you cowardly rufian?"

"Ba Jove!" fairly hissed the dude. "I shall have to throw yaw out of the car, I see!"

"No, I don't believe you will," said Tom, quietly; "but the sooner you drop out yourself, the better."

And, as the boy spoke, Gussie felt the cold muzzle of a revolver pressed against his temple.

"You see I have kept the weapon," said Tom, coolly. "Now, then, release the young lady."

"B-b-ba Jove!" exclaimed Gussie, all his valor gone, as he obeyed the command.

"Now," continued Tom, "go and sit in the opposite corner." Gussie did so."

"Fold your arms."

The dude obeyed, without loss of time.

"Now, then," said Tom, "you stay just as you are until we reach the next station, and then I shall hand you over to the police."

"No, no!" cried the girl.

"N-n-n-nc, don't do that!" exclaimed Gussie, in terror.

Tom paid no attention to him, but turned to the young lady.

"You don't want him punished, miss?"

"No, not in that way. Think of the scandal, the notoriety, sir. No; let him go."

"Y-ya-as, let me go!" added Gussie, with a look that almost made the boy laugh.

"It shall be as you say, miss," he replied, "but I think you'd better let me do as I suggested."

"No, no!"

"No, no!" echoed Gussie. "She'd have her name in the papers, don'tcher know, and that would be deucedly unpleasant."

"Oh, shut up!" said Tom, slangily; "you make me sick. Excuse me," he added, turning to the young lady, "but I have met this fellow before, and the very sight of him disgusts me."

"You are very excusable, I think," said the girl, with a faint smile.

"B-ba Jove!" gasped Gussie, faintly.

And both Tom and his fair companion laughed.

Just then the speed of the train began to slacken.

"We're going to stop, I guess," said Tom. "You'd better get out, Gussie."

"Ya-as, ba Jove!" drawled the dude.

The train came to a standstill at a small country station, and Gussie lost no time in leaving the compartment.

When he reached the platform, he turned and shook his fist at Tom.

"I'll see yaw later, yaw young cub!" he fairly shrieked. "And then, ba Jove——"

He did not finish the sentence, for at that moment a burly porter, with a trunk on his shoulder, ran against him, and down he went, "head over heels."

As he picked himself up, and looked for his hat, he was, perhaps, the maddest dude in all England.

He saw Tom and the young lady laughing at him, in their compartment, and he would probably have given vent to his feelings in the most energetic language at his command had not the signal to start the train been given.

As the mortified dude scrambled into another compartment, the young lady turned to Tom.

"Oh, I'm so glad he's gone!" she exclaimed.

Her air of reserve had vanished, and there was a pleasant, friendly smile upon her pretty face.

"I'm afraid you're angry with me," she said, with a smile that was almost coquettish.

"Angry!" exclaimed Tom. "Why should I be?"

"Well, I wasn't very polite to you when you offered me that book. You see, I was afraid to have anything to say to a stranger in a public conveyance; but now that I know you are a gentleman, I feel differently. You are an American, aren't you?"

"I am."

"I thought so, from your accent. I like Americans so much!"

"Then I have still another reason for being glad that I am an American," replied Tom, gallantly.

The young lady laughed.

"Won't you tell me your name?"

"Certainly; it is Thomas Woods."

"And mine is Beatrice Gresham."

"A very pretty name," said Tom, audaciously. "I suppose you are not an American?"

"Oh, no; I'm English. My papa is Sir George Gresham."

"A baronet!" exclaimed our hero, gazing upon his companion, almost with awe.

The young girl talked on until the train rolled into the immense station in London.

As Tom alighted from the compartment, and assisted his fair companion to the platform, he saw Gussie Smythe glaring at them, an expression of the utmost hatred on his weak face.

In another moment the dude was gone, but Tom felt sure that he had not seen the last of him.

"I don't see papa anywhere," said Miss Gresham, looking about

her; "but I think I know where I can find him. He is one of the directors of the road, and I think he is in the private office. Will you wait here until I come back?"

"Certainly, Miss Gresham," replied Tom, who was quite anxious to see what a "real, live baronet" looked like.

The girl hurried away.

A moment later, Tom felt a touch upon his shoulder, and a familiar voice said:

"Tom, old man, how are you?"

It was young Vinton.

Tom started.

"How did you get here?"

"Came on the train," laughed Vinton. "I've been here for the last two days."

"But—but—" stammered our hero.

"But how did I get away from the police?" said Vinton. "Oh, they found out their mistake within a couple of hours."

"Mistake!"

"Yes. The real Tony Rawson turned up."

"And you are not—"

"Tony Rawson? Of course not. I only said I was to give you a chance to get off, for I believed that you were he. I knew that I could establish my identity easily enough when you were out of the way, and I thought I could afford to make that slight sacrifice for you. But I was mighty glad to learn that you were not the embezzler."

"Not gladder than I am to know that you are not."

"Well, it was a mistake all around," laughed Vinton. "And, now, tell me, who is that remarkably pretty girl who just left you?"

In reply, Tom briefly narrated the events of his trip from Liverpool.

Just then Miss Gresham came up, saying:

"Mr. Woods, let me introduce my papa, Sir George Gresham."

Sir George, a stout, bluff, good-natured-looking old man, grasped our hero's hand.

"I'm glad to know you, my young friend," he said. "I like all Americans, and I certainly have a good reason to like you, after what you have done for my little Beatrice here."

"Oh, that was nothing, Sir George," said Tom, blushing, diffidently.

"I must differ from you on that point," said the baronet, good-naturedly. "I think you displayed a good deal of characteristic Yankee pluck. But may I not know your friend?"

Tom introduced Vinton, whose hand the old gentleman shook almost as cordially as he had Tom's.

"You have friends in London?" he said, addressing our hero.

The boy replied in the negative.

"Where are you going, then?"

"To a hotel. Perhaps you will kindly recommend a good one, Sir George?"

"I'll do nothing of the sort. You must go home with me, both of you. I'll take no refusal; come along with you."

And before they had fairly caught their breath, the two young men found themselves in the baronet's elegant carriage, on their way to his mansion.

CHAPTER XIV.

"I WILL FIND HER."

Tom had hardly recovered his breath, when the Gresham mansion was reached, and he nearly lost it again as he entered the portals of the elegant dwelling.

Vinton took his magnificent surroundings much more as a mat-

ter of course; and, perhaps, our hero envied him a little that he was able to do so.

"You shall be shown to your rooms at once," said the baronet. "I ordered dinner delayed until Miss Beatrice's arrival, but I presume it is nearly ready now."

"Dinner at ten o'clock at night!", thought Tom. "I wonder when they have breakfast?"

For several days the young men remained the baronet's guests; and, had they been his most intimate friends, or the most distinguished people in the land, they could not have been treated with more consideration and deference.

"Nothing seems to be too good for us," said Tom to Vinton, one evening after they had retired to their rooms. "I wonder if all of the nobility are like him?"

"They are not, by any means," replied Vinton, warmly. "I have met a good many of them in the past, and I can assure you that Sir George is much more like an American gentleman than a member of the nobility. And, as for his daughter, she is an angel."

"Vinton," said Tom, bluntly, "you're in love with that young lady?"

His companion gazed at him a few moments in silence, an expression of pain upon his face.

Then he said:

"Yes, Tom, I am. I do love her—love her as I never thought I could love a human being. But it is a hopeless passion."

"Hopeless? Why?" said our hero. "Because she is a baronet's daughter?"

"That would, indeed, be an obstacle," said Vinton, sadly; "but it is not the only one."

"What is the other?" laughed Tom. "Are you afraid that she doesn't love you? If so, I venture to assure you that you are mistaken, for I have a notion that she has a very soft spot in her heart for you."

"Frankly," replied Vinton, "I believe that you are right—that she does care for me. But, even if she were willing to marry me, it would be impossible—impossible!"

"Why impossible?" persisted Tom.

"Because—because I am married already, Tom."

"Married! You married!" exclaimed the boy, in amazement.

"Yes; I have been married two years."

"But—but where is your wife?"

"Heaven only knows," replied Vinton, bitterly. "She was an adventuress, who, believing me to be wealthy, enticed me into a marriage when I was under the influence of liquor. She was several years my senior, a thorough woman of the world, and I was but a puppet in her hands. I need not linger upon the degrading particulars of that mad marriage; suffice it to say that, a few days later, my wife, having discovered that she had been mistaken as to my income and social position, deserted me."

"You were probably glad enough to be rid of her?" said Tom.

"I was. My marriage was a mad act; I detested the woman. From that day to this I have not seen her. But I am still bound to her, for our marriage was a legal one."

"But the law would release you," suggested Tom.

Vinton shook his head.

"Could I ask such an angel as Beatrice Gresham to unite her life to that of a man with a past like mine? No, no!"

And the young man's head sank upon his breast, and he relapsed into an evidently painful reverie.

Suddenly the sound of voices outside their door attracted their attention—the voices of two of the menservants.

"I tell you," said one, "I'm right. Miss Beatrice's dead in love with 'im."

"In love with a fellow like that Dupont!" returned the other, scornfully. "I don't believe a word of it!"

"You needn't hif you don't want to," was the response; "but hit's so, and, hif there ain't an helopement in 'igh life before many days, my name ain't Jeemes Watkins. Think 'ow hit'll look in the papers. 'The daughter hof Sir George Gresham helopes with 'er French ridin' teacher.' Hit'll be a big sensation, me boy."

Tom and Vinton started at each other in amazement.

Achille Dupont, Miss Beatrice's riding-master, was a small, elderly, weazened Frenchman, of anything but attractive appearance, and the idea that she had eloped with him seemed absurd.

But the hot-headed, impulsive Vinton sprang to his feet, flung open the door, and, seizing the astonished servant by the throat, shouted:

"You villain, if you ever dare insinuate such a thing again, I'll kill you where you stand!"

Attracted by the noise, Sir George came hurrying to the scene. Explanations ensued, and the garrulous servant was discharged at once.

"You were hasty, my boy," said the old baronet, "but, by Jove, you did just what I should myself under the circumstances, and I can't help liking you for it."

"To-morrow," said Vinton to Tom, when they were alone in their rooms again, "I shall leave this house. To remain here any longer, to see her every day, and know that my passion is so mad, so helpless—it is unbearable."

But the next morning brought a strangely altered state of affairs.

At nine o'clock Sir George came to his guests' room, and knocked for admittance.

One glance at his face showed the two young men that he was intensely agitated.

"She's gone!" he gasped, as he sank heavily into a chair.

"What do you mean?" cried Vinton, excitedly. "Who is gone, Sir George?"

"My child—Beatrice! Her bed has not been slept upon, a note in her handwriting has been found in her room, stating that she eloped with that wretch, Dupont. My God! the humiliation of it!"

"It is not true!" cried Tom, in a thrilling voice. "It is a vile plot! The note is a forgery; Miss Beatrice has not eloped; she has been abducted. But I will find her, Sir George, and bring her back to you."

The boy little guessed the perils that he was destined to undergo in the pursuit of his chivalrous purpose.

CHAPTER XV.

TOM GAINS A CLEW.

Sir George Gresham seized Tom's hand, and pressed it convulsively, saying:

"You are right, my boy; Beatrice is incapable of such an act, and I was wrong to suspect her for an instant."

"I think you were, Sir George."

"I am sure of it," added Vinton, warmly. "Miss Beatrice is an angel: what could she have in common with a creature like this Dupont? It is as Tom says—she is the victim of an infernal plot!"

"I have never liked the fellow," said the baronet, "but I did not dream him capable of such an act as this. He was a skillful rider, was highly recommended, and I never regarded him as anything more than a servant. The wretch! Had I suspected for an instant what was in his foul mind, I would have killed

him! But enough of this—it is but a waste of valuable time. The police must be notified."

"The sooner, the better," said Vinton. "Allow me to perform that task, Sir George."

And the young man hurried away, while Tom turned to the baronet.

"Well?"

"Sir George," asked the boy, "may I question your servants?"

"For what purpose?"

"To learn if possible, if they know anything that can throw any light upon the mystery."

"You have a suspicion?"

"I suspect that woman, Felice Duval."

The baronet stared at his young companion.

"Miss Beatrice's maid?"

"Yes, Sir George."

"Nonsense!" and Sir George smiled, in spite of his grief. "Why, Tom, the idea is preposterous! She was devoted to Beatrice."

"I overheard a portion of an interview between her and Dupont, the day before yesterday."

"Ah!"

"Yes. They did not know that any one was within earshot. Miss Beatrice had just returned from her morning ride, having been accompanied by Dupont. I heard the woman ask the riding teacher: 'Is everything ready?' He replied: 'Nearly; in a day or two we will give them a grand surprise.'"

"What else did you overhear?" questioned the baronet, with evident interest.

"That is all that I could understand, Sir George; after that they began talking in French. They were, evidently, a good deal interested and excited."

"Humph! But, Tom, all this may have no connection at all with my daughter's abduction."

"True, Sir George; but I wondered at the time what it meant, and, as soon as I heard of Miss Beatrice's disappearance, it returned to me, and I felt sure that it had some reference to it."

"I am not yet ready to agree with you, my boy, nor do I wish to dispute the correctness of your conclusion. You shall question the servants, if you like; but what do you expect to gain by so doing? If this woman, Felice Duval, is as shrewd as you think her, she will be far too shrewd to criminate herself by making any indiscreet reply."

"True, sir; but I want to study her face, her manner, to see how she will stand being examined on the subject."

"Very well, Tom, you shall have your way in the matter; but I grant the request more to please you than because I have much faith in your theory."

"The result may prove whether I am right or not, Sir George."

The baronet at once gave orders to his valet, Thompson, to have the various domestics connected with the establishment assembled together in the servants' hall, and ten minutes later they were there awaiting their employer's orders.

As Tom entered the room, accompanied by Sir George, the first face that met his eyes was that of the maid, Felice Duval.

She was a tall, dark, rather handsome girl, of about twenty-seven or eight, and her eyes met those of the boy with an almost defiant stare.

She was the first of the servants to speak.

Dropping a curtsey to the baronet, she said:

"Sir George, w'at is ze reason I haf been brought here wiz zese people? I am no servant; I am ze companion of mademoiselle."

"You are a servant, like the rest," replied Sir George, haughtily,

"and you have been asked to come here with the others because my young friend here wishes to ask a few questions of you all."

"Ask me questions?" said the woman, shrilly. "About w'at?"

"About Miss Beatrice's disappearance," replied Tom, as the baronet made no immediate response.

"About ze mademoiselle's disappearance? W'at I know about zat? You t'ink zat I haf stolen her, eh?"

"No one thinks anything of the sort," said Tom, with as much politeness as he could command. "I only want to see if I cannot gain some clew to this mystery."

"Zere is no mystery," said the French woman. "Mees Beatrice 'ave elope—zat is all."

"It is a lie!" cried the baronet, losing control of himself. "You do not believe it yourself."

"I do believe it—I know it."

"You know it?"

"Yes, I know zat she love Achille Dupont—oh, zere is no doubt of zat."

And the woman laughed, harshly.

Seeing that Sir George was about to make a heated reply, Tom begged him, by a glance, to be silent.

Then, turning to the Frenchwoman, he said :

"Dupont was a great friend of yours, was he not?"

Again the woman laughed.

"A friend of mine? *Non, non*; an acquaintance—nozing more."

"Humph! You and he seemed to be on pretty confidential terms."

The French maid looked sharply at the boy.

"I know not w'at you mean. I spe'k wiz him two—tree time—zat is all."

"Will you inform me what you meant by what I overheard you say to him the other day?"

"W'at you have overheard?" snapped Felice.

In reply, Tom repeated the brief dialogue which he had already rehearsed to Sir George.

As the woman listened, her face grew pale, and her dark eyes flashed.

"I nevair say zat—it is one lie!" she almost screamed. "Sir George, I am insulted. I quit your service."

And she flounced out of the room.

"Good," murmured Tom; "I have a clew; I was not wrong. Now for work!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CHASE COMMENCES.

"Sir George," added our hero, in a low tone, turning to the baronet, "please do not let that woman leave the house just yet."

"Very well," said the old gentleman; "I will delay the payment of her money; there are several pounds due her, and she will not be likely to go until she receives the amount."

"Do so, Sir George. Well, do you now believe that I was right?"

"Yes, yes; the woman knows something of the affair—there can be no doubt of that. As soon as the police come she shall be arrested."

"No, no, Sir George, do not do that!" cried the boy, earnestly.

"Why not?" asked the baronet, in surprise.

"Because it would give the alarm to her fellow-conspirators. This Felice Duval is not the prime mover in the enterprise. Leave it to me. I will follow her! I only want time to prepare a disguise."

Sir George left the room.

Tom turned again to the servants, who had been conversing, in low tones, by themselves, and asked them a few more questions.

BRAVE AND BOLD.

They replied readily enough, for the boy was a favorite with all of them.

But it was apparent to Tom, after a very few minutes, that—as he had supposed from the first—they knew nothing more about their young mistress' disappearance than he did himself.

But they all evidently believed, as he did, that Felice Duval was in the conspiracy of which Achille Dupont was the ringleader.

It was a deep-laid, long-considered plot, of which these simple-minded people were entirely innocent of any knowledge; that was plain enough.

After a few minutes spent in questioning them, he returned to Sir George's study.

"The woman refuses to remain in the house another hour," said the baronet. "She is in her room now, packing her clothes. Of course, I cannot force her to stay, Tom, but the police—"

"Her arrest, I am sure, Sir George," said Tom, earnestly, "might destroy the only chance we have of solving the mystery of Miss Beatrice's disappearance. Let her leave the house as soon as she will, sir; rest assured, I shall not lose sight of her."

"It shall be as you say, Tom."

At this moment the French maid entered the room, dressed for the street, a large valise in her hand.

"I am going, Sir George," she said, with only a very faint show of respect. "Vill you gif me my money?"

"Certainly; I will write you a check at once," replied the baronet.

As he turned to his desk, Tom hastily left the room.

A few moments later, he stood in a spot within view of the baronet's mansion, where he could be sheltered from observation, awaiting the appearance of the French maid.

"Now, we shall see," he murmured, "whether Young America isn't more than a match for villainy like this. I have an idea that it is. It's a pity I didn't have a chance to get a disguise ready; but no matter—they shan't get the best of me, anyhow."

But he had to wait nearly twenty minutes before the French woman appeared.

Felice Duval gazed about her on all sides, as if suspecting that she might be watched; but Tom took good care to keep out of the range of her vision, and she had, evidently, no suspicion of his nearness.

After staring up and down the street a few moments, she walked rapidly away, Tom following her.

Several times she turned and looked behind her, but Tom was quick enough to elude her observation, and she continued her way until she reached a public thoroughfare, in which a number of cabs were standing.

She whispered a few words to the driver of one of the vehicles, entered the cab, and was driven swiftly away.

Scarcely had she started, when Tom rushed up to one of the other drivers, saying, breathlessly:

"You saw the cab that just left?"

The man stared at him, rubbed his eyes sleepily, and replied, slowly:

"I seed hit; w'at hof hit?"

"Can you follow it?"

"I could, but—"

"Two pounds if you don't lose sight of it until it reaches its destination."

In an instant, "cabby's" sleepy demeanor had vanished.

"Jump hin, sir, hand be quick, hif yer please, fer they've got a good start hof us a'ready."

Tom lost not an instant in obeying the injunction, and a moment later was whirling down one of the most crowded of London's many crowded thoroughfares.

He peered out of the window, but the street was thronged with vehicles of all sorts, and he could not distinguish the one which Felice Duval had taken.

But he knew, from the course the cab was pursuing, that the driver's eyes were upon it, and he leaned back in his seat and tried to restrain his impatience.

After half an hour's drive, the vehicle came to a standstill, in one of the most crowded quarters of Whitechapel.

"Is the other cab within sight?" asked Tom, breathlessly.

"Hit's gone—hit was hover yonder, sir; but don't yer worry; I took good care that the young woman as got hout didn't know she was foller'd. I've done this kind o' work afore."

"Where is she?" demanded Tom.

"She went inter the Tiger."

"The what?"

"The Tiger—hit's a public 'ouse. Yer don't know Whitechapel, sir, or yer'd know the Tiger."

"What sort of a place is it?" asked the boy.

The cabman shook his head.

"There ain't no wuss hin hall London. I wouldn't advise a young gent like you ter go hinter the place. Hit's a thieves' den—that's wot hit his."

"I must go into it. Thank you. Here's your money."

And the boy sprang from the cab.

"This 'ere's a queer lark," muttered the man, as he reascended to his box. "A young swell like him a-follerin' a furrin young woman ter Whitechapel, and heven hinter the Tiger! Well, hit ain't none o' my business."

As the cab drove away, Tom stood and critically surveyed the exterior of the "Tiger."

Certainly the appearance of the place and of the people was anything but prepossessing.

"It's a tough-looking den," murmured the boy. "But I've got to get inside it, and that quickly. First, however, I must have a disguise. How shall I get it?"

CHAPTER XVII.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

It was necessary for Tom to procure a disguise in some manner, and that quickly.

But how could he do it?

While standing, undecided, upon the pavement, his eyes fell upon a boy of about his own age, who stood curiously surveying him—a boy clothed in rags, and covered with dirt—evidently a child of the gutter.

An idea occurred to our hero.

He approached the boy.

"I want to make a bargain with you," he said.

The lad stared at him.

"W'at?"

Tom repeated the remark.

"W'at kind of a bargain? Want an errand done?"

"No, no. I want a disguise."

"A which?"

"A disguise. I'm out on a lark, you understand, and I want to change clothes with you."

"Change clothes with me? You?"

And the boy stared at him, as if doubting the evidence of his senses.

"Yes."

"Give me them there swell togs for these here things?"

"Yes."

"That's a queer kind of a lark, but I'm willin' if you are."

"Then where shall we go to change them?" cried Tom, impatiently.

"In yonder—that's where I sleep."

And he pointed to a dark, dingy cellar at the head of the steps of which they were standing.

In a few moments the change of clothes was effected.

When he entered the "Tiger" no one who had ever seen him before would have recognized him.

Clothed in rags from head to foot, his hands and face begrimed with dirt, he looked fully as wretched as the owner of the clothes he wore.

The room, a large one, was crowded with men and women, who were seated at little tables, drinking.

All were plainly of the lowest and most degraded class.

Tom's quick eye glanced over the assemblage; and fastened itself on Felice Duval.

The Frenchwoman was seated at one of the tables, in company with a stout, elderly man, with whom she was conversing excitedly.

Tom swaggered up, and took a seat—luckily vacant—at the next table, where he could overhear all that they said.

But he was scarcely seated, when a waiter laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Get out o' here, you!"

"What for?" whined Tom. "I want a glass o' ale."

"Where's yer money?"

Tom produced a coin.

"Here's a sixpence that a swell cove give me fer runnin' an errand fer him."

The waiter seized it, and started off to draw the ale.

The couple at the next table, who had suspended their conversation to listen to this brief dialogue, now resumed it.

"That's all there is about it," said the man. "It ain't no use your growling—they're gone."

"But Achille promised—" began the Frenchwoman.

"I know," interrupted her companion, "that he promised to wait till he saw you. But he thought it wasn't safe, and so he got out."

"And left me to follow him alone?"

"Well, you ain't afraid to travel alone, are you?" grinned the man. "You've done it before. He said you were to take the boat at Dover to-night, and meet him at the place you know in Calais."

"He will make some mistake!" hissed the Frenchwoman. "He needs me."

"Oh, Achille is no fool," said her companion. "Besides, he's got the old woman with him, and she'll manage things well enough."

"If ze girl makes trouble—"

"But she won't make trouble. Now, don't you fret, my beauty. You French are the uneasiest race I ever saw. Just you keep cool; take the Calais boat to-night, there won't be any trouble."

"I s'all go, but I vill make Achille suffaire for zis!"

"Oh, I don't doubt you will," laughed the man, as he arose.

The couple left the place, Felice talking excitedly all the while.

A moment later Tom arose, and, leaving his glass of ale untouched on the table, hurried out.

The Frenchwoman and her companion were nowhere to be seen, but this did not annoy Tom in the least; he had had no intention of following them.

He had learned all he wanted to know; Achille Dupont had taken Beatrice Gresham to France, and Felice was to follow them that night.

Our hero's course was plainly to follow the Frenchwoman, and he had now ample time in which to make all his preparations.

He returned at once to the cellar, where he found the boy awaiting him.

In a few minutes a re-exchange of clothes was made; and, having paid the lad a sovereign he had promised him, Tom left the place.

Soon after he reached the more aristocratic part of the city, on his way back to Sir George Gresham's mansion, he ran into a fashionably-dressed young fellow, who exclaimed, as he recovered from the shock:

"B-ba Jove!"

"Oh, it's you, is it, Gussie?" said Tom, recognizing his old antagonist.

"Ya-as, ba Jove, it is, and I'll give yaw reason to remember me this time, don'tcherknow!"

Like many dudes, Gussie had taken boxing lessons, and thought he "knew it all."

So out went his right fist, and if it had hit Tom it would probably have hurt him.

But it didn't.

It hit nothing, but just at the moment when it ought to have come in contact with the boy's head something struck Gussie, and down he went.

Tom knew something about the manly art, too.

As the dude picked himself up, and brushed the dust from his clothes, he shouted:

"I'll make yaw sorry for this, ba Jove!"

But Tom did not hear him; he was already half a block away; he had no time to spend with Gussie.

The dude did not follow him—he had probably had enough for one day.

Tom found Vinton awaiting him at the baronet's mansion.

"The detectives have been here," the young man said, "and Sir George has gone out with them. They favor the theory that Beatrice has really eloped with the Frenchman."

"Then they are fools!" cried our hero, excitedly.

"I hope and pray that they are wrong," said Vinton, sadly.

"I know that they are."

And Tom proceeded to inform his friend of his recent adventures.

"You're a genius, Tom!" cried Vinton, when he had finished. "And now what do you mean to do?"

"Follow Felice Duval to France, and save Sir George's daughter."

"Good! And I will go with you."

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN INTERRUPTED JOURNEY.

Tom seized Vinton's hand.

"Do you mean it?"

"Of course I do. I have told you that I love her; do you think I will leave a stone unturned to save her from the fate with which she is threatened?"

"No."

"Of course I will not. But we must wait until Sir George returns."

"Why?" asked Tom, impatiently.

"Why? Because it is our duty to acquaint him with the information we have gained, and inform him of our plans. Do you not think so?"

"No, I don't," replied the impetuous and go-ahead Tom. "We've got to go to Dover to catch the steamer for Calais."

BRAVE AND BOLD.

When they were ready to leave the mansion, the baronet had not returned, and they reluctantly took their departure, leaving a brief note, informing him of their destination.

Tickets and passports were procured, and in due time Dover, the nearest point of the English coast to France, was reached.

"We've got to look out for disguises, for Felice Duval, the Frenchwoman, will be on the steamer, and it won't do to have her recognize us," said Tom.

"True."

"Let's see about the disguises the first thing, and then we'll do our sight-seeing."

The disguises were procured, more easily than they had anticipated, at a local costumer's—a couple of wigs and mustaches and a pair of side-whiskers, the latter of which were donned by Vinton.

When they once more reached the steamer, about half an hour before the time of its departure from the shores of England, Vinton drew a long breath of relief.

"At last!" he murmured. "In a few hours we shall be in France, and then—"

"And then," said Tom, finishing the sentence for him, "we'll show the English detectives that a couple of nervy young Americans can do more than all Scotland Yard put together."

"I hope so," returned Vinton.

"And I know so. Now, let's go into the cabin, and see if we can find our French friend, Felice Duval."

Vinton grasped his companion's arm, whispering in his ear:

"Hush! There she is!"

Tom looked in the direction in which Vinton's eyes were fixed, and beheld the Frenchwoman pacing the deck, with short, quick steps.

After a time, the two youths went to their stateroom, where they remained for some time, resting from their "tramp."

Just before the steamer sailed, Vinton returned to the deck, leaving Tom in a half doze in his berth.

Scarcely had the young man stepped upon the deck, when he observed a tall, plainly-dressed individual regarding him attentively.

For some minutes this man stared at him, in a manner so marked that Vinton, who at first pretended not to notice him, turned and confronted him, an inquiring look upon his face.

At this the stranger stepped forward, and addressed him:

"Your name is Vinton, I think?"

The young man hesitated.

"Is it, or is it not?" persisted the unknown.

"Well, if it is, what then?" inquired Vinton,

"If it is, let me ask you why you are disguised?"

"That is my business," returned the youth.

"You don't seem to grasp the situation; you are my prisoner."

"Your prisoner?" gasped Vinton.

"Yes; I am a detective. I have followed you all the way from London."

"And upon what charge do you arrest me?"

"Upon the charge of complicity in the abduction of Sir George Gresham's daughter."

Vinton laughed aloud.

"You never made a bigger mistake in your life."

"That remains to be seen."

"I thought the police believed that she had already eloped with Dupont?"

"Some do, and some do not; I happen to be one of the latter class. Now, you'd better take this thing quietly, and come along with me. There's no time to be lost. Come along; in another

minute the steamer will be off, and I don't propose to go with you to Calais. Come."

And he laid his hand upon the young man's arm.

Vinton hesitated a moment.

He knew that resistance would be useless, and he decided to attempt none.

Nothing had been said about Tom, and he quickly resolved to make no reference to the boy, feeling sure that if he did so, his friend, too, would be made a prison

So he said, quietly:

"I will go with you."

And, followed closely by the detective, he marched down the gangplank only a moment before it was drawn in.

CHAPTER XIX.

UNCONGENIAL TRAVELING COMPANIONS.

While Tom was going through these adventures in Europe, things were happening in New York at a lively rate.

As may be imagined, the compact between Mrs. Smythe and the alleged widow of the millionaire was not productive of agreeable results.

The adventuress managed affairs with a high hand.

She assumed control of everything, ruled the servants with a rod of iron, and completely put Mrs. Smythe in the background.

She had a ready fund of wit, of a coarse kind, and she aimed her shafts of ridicule so unceasingly at Gussie, who, as we have seen, was not apt at repartee, that she actually drove the dude out of the country.

At last, Mrs. Smythe reached the point where she felt that she could endure no more. Even an ocean voyage, which she dreaded greatly, was preferable to the further companionship of the adventuress, and she decided to surrender the custody of the house to her.

"Been out for a walk, eh?" said the alleged widow, as Mrs. Smythe entered the drawing-room one morning. "And only ten o'clock! Dear me! I wish I were an early riser like you. Why, I've only just finished my breakfast, and I thought I was making pretty good time at that. Why didn't you wake me up and give me an invitation to go with you?"

Mrs. Smythe glared at her companion as if she would have liked to scratch her eyes out—as she probably would—but she replied, with forced calmness:

"I just telegraphed my son that I would join him in London."

"Great Scott! And you're willing to leave the house in my possession?"

"I am."

"Because you can't help yourself," laughed the woman. "Well, you must want to get away from me pretty badly."

Mrs. Smythe's lips parted, to make a bitter reply, but with a strong effort she controlled herself, and swept from the room, followed by the ringing laugh of the woman she hated.

"I'll worry her a little more yet," muttered the adventuress. "Confound her, and her airs! I'm as good as she is, any day in the week, and I'll make her feel it before I get through with her."

And she lighted a cigarette, and remained in a contemplative mood for some time.

The preparations for Mrs. Smythe's journey were quickly made; and on the evening of the third day after the conversation just related her carriage was at the door, waiting to convey her to the steamer.

As she descended from her room to take her departure, the adventuress emerged from the drawing-room.

"Off, eh?"

There was an expression upon the woman's face that Mrs. Smythe did not understand—a smile playing about the corners of her mouth—a look of suppressed amusement.

"I am about to leave," was the cold reply. "The steamer sails at an early hour in the morning, and I prefer to remain on board overnight."

"Yes, that's better for ladies of luxurious habits, like you and me, than getting up before sunrise. Well, *au revoir*, as they say in French. Take good care of yourself—don't get seasick, and be sure not to forget to give my love to dear Gussie."

Mrs. Smythe hurried out without making any response.

In another moment her carriage had rolled away.

The adventuress returned to the drawing-room, seated herself in an easy-chair, and burst into a profound fit of laughter.

"This is rich! She little imagines what a glorious surprise is in store for her. This is the advantage of being rich and able to indulge in your capricious whims."

When Mrs. Smythe arose in the morning, the steamer was off Sandy Hook.

It was with a deep sigh of relief that Mrs. Smythe reflected that every moment increased the distance between her and the woman she hated.

But as she emerged from her stateroom into the cabin, she started back, with an involuntary exclamation of astonishment and dismay.

And no wonder, for, seated directly in front of her stateroom door, a paper-covered novel in her hand, was the very woman from whom she was fleeing!

The adventuress arose, and exclaimed, with an affectation of great cordiality:

"My dear Mrs. Smythe, what a delightful meeting! I came on board only an hour after you last evening. And just think! my stateroom—which I engaged two days ago—is next yours. Isn't it charming? I don't suppose you know a soul on board; neither do I; how much we shall enjoy each other's society!"

Mrs. Smythe was about to reply, when an expensively but flashily-dressed man, of perhaps thirty, sauntered up, and, extending his hand said:

"Why, Nance, how are you?"

The adventuress turned ghastly pale.

"Dick Danton!" she gasped.

"Why, cert, it's your old friend Dick. Won't you take my hand?"

The woman allowed her hand to rest in his palm. She seemed unable to speak.

"What's this one of the officers was just telling me," the fellow went on, "about your being the widow of a Fifth Avenue swell? How's that? What has Syd got to say about it? Who—"

The adventuress, who was beginning to regain her composure, silenced him by a glance, which he seemed to immediately understand.

"What are you talking about, Dick? How have you been? Come, give me your arm, and let's go on deck, and talk over old times."

As the couple moved away, Mrs. Smythe gazed after them, with a baleful look.

"What was the meaning of that agitation? You wretched woman, I will know its meaning. I will see that man; he shall tell me your secret."

In the meantime, the adventuress and her companion were engaged in an excited dialogue.

"You nearly gave me away!" hissed the woman.

"How the mischief did I know? Say, what does this mean, anyhow? Where's Syd?"

"Dead," was the reply, after a moment's hesitation.

Her companion laughed.

"Oh, no; that don't go. He's no more dead than I am. So you're posing as the widow of a millionaire?"

"I am the widow of a millionaire!"

"Oh, don't try to be funny with me, Nance; you ought to know me better. Now, then, you know I'm biz all through, and a yard wide. Let's get right to the point; what do I get for not squealing?"

"I will come to the point—five thousand dollars."

"It won't do; make it ten."

"I'll do it."

"Done! That's the way I like to do business. When do I see the shekels?"

"When we reach the other side."

"All right."

"In the meantime, not a word, not a hint to that woman; she is my late husband's sister."

"Oh, that's all right—I won't talk; you know me well enough for that."

"I may depend upon you?"

"Of course you may; how many times do you want me to tell you?"

"I believe you," said the adventuress. "But," she added, as she walked away, "I'd give double the ten thousand dollars if I hadn't met you here. Just my luck! What a fool I was to attempt this journey!"

CHAPTER XX.

DICK DANTON'S DISAPPEARANCE.

Mrs. Smythe found an opportunity, a few mornings later, to have an interview with Dick Danton, before her enemy had arisen.

They had already been introduced by the adventuress, but had not exchanged a word, except in her presence.

Meeting Danton upon the main deck, Mrs. Smythe drew him aside, and said:

"May I have a few words with you?"

The fellow was on guard in a moment.

"Certainly," he replied, as he seated himself by the lady's side.

"Have you known that—that woman long?" she asked, her face and accents showing all the hatred she felt toward her sister-in-law.

"What woman?" inquired Danton, cautiously.

"You know whom I mean," was Mrs. Smythe's impatient rejoinder.

"Well," admitted Danton, "I suppose I do. I have known her for a number of years."

"Humph! Under what circumstances?"

"I think I must decline to answer that question."

"Suppose I make it worth your while to do so?"

"I doubt that you could, madam."

"Why do you doubt it? I am a wealthy woman, and I should be still wealthier were it not for her."

"I understand. She turned up as your brother's widow just as you thought yourself sure of the fortune?"

"Yes."

"Well, accidents will happen," laughed Danton, coarsely.

"Tell me one thing," almost whispered Mrs. Smythe, "who is the 'Syd' of whom you spoke to her?"

Danton's expression changed.

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"What will you pay?"

"If the information rids me of this woman, and her claims, I will give you twenty thousand dollars."

Danton's eyes glistened.

"Meet me here to-night at nine o'clock."

"Why not tell me now?"

"Hush!"

"Why, good-morning!" sounded the voice of the woman about whom they were talking. "Having a pleasant *tête-à-tête*—isn't that the swell name for it?—I see."

Where she had come from, neither of the couple could imagine. She appeared as suddenly as if she had sprung up from the deck.

Mrs. Smythe arose to her feet.

"Why, dear me," went on the adventuress, who seemed perfectly cool and collected, "what's the matter with you two? You look as guilty as if you had been conspiring against me. Ha, ha, ha! Shan't we go in to breakfast, my dear sister-in-law?"

With a meaning glance at Danton, Mrs. Smythe followed the woman into the cabin.

Danton did not keep his appointment with Mrs. Smythe, and the next morning it was noised through the ship that Mr. Danton—who had been quite a favorite with many of the male passengers—had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared.

No one could be found who had seen him since about eight o'clock the previous evening.

The vessel was searched for him, but he had vanished.

It was finally concluded that he had fallen overboard, though how the accident could have happened, the night being clear and the sea calm, was incomprehensible to every one.

Mrs. Smythe was convinced that, if any person on board could solve the mystery of Dick Danton's disappearance, that person was her sister-in-law.

But suspicions were not proofs, and she was forced to hold her peace, though she would gladly have accused the woman had she dared.

The remainder of the voyage was uneventful. Mrs. Smythe shunned the adventuress as much as she possibly could, and the woman, as in New York, amused herself by annoying her "swell" relative in every way in her power.

When the vessel reached Liverpool, the two women went their separate ways, Mrs. Smythe being met by Gussie at the wharf.

"We shall meet again," were the parting words of the adventuress, as she flung a kiss at the horrified Gussie and his mamma. "Don't forget me in the meantime. Ta, ta!"

Meanwhile, Tom had started on his voyage to Calais.

The motion of the steamer aroused him from his slumbers, and he hurried to the deck.

The chalk cliffs of Dover had now disappeared in the gloom, but the lights of the town were still visible.

Tom looked everywhere for Vinton, but, of course, could not find him.

He was becoming very uneasy, when a gentleman who had witnessed the young man's arrest approached and informed him of the occurrence.

"Arrested!" gasped the boy. "For what?"

"It was something in connection with this elopement of Sir George Gresham's daughter."

Then Tom understood that Vinton had refrained from notifying him, fearing that he would share his fate.

"He will easily prove his innocence," he murmured, "and will follow me. But in the meantime I may succeed in overtaking these villains and saving Beatrice. Confound the stupidity of these English police! One Yankee lad is worth a dozen of them."

With this bit of perhaps pardonable conceit, Tom began pacing the deck.

He had not taken a dozen steps before he started back in surprise.

Seated near him, engaged in conversation, were Mrs. Smythe, Gussie and the woman who had professed to be his foster-father's widow.

The adventuress and her two relatives by marriage had been thrown together again.

Tom's first thought was that they would recognize him, but as Gussie stared up into his face evidently not aware of his identity, he remembered his disguise.

The short voyage was uneventful, except that the channel was even rougher than usual, and most of the passengers were seasick.

They were a woe-begone looking lot when they landed at Calais the next morning, particularly Gussie Smythe, who had been, perhaps the sickest man on board, and could hardly walk.

CHAPTER XXI.

TOM IN PARIS.

Felice Duval, who had been standing nervously awaiting the opportunity to disembark, hurried down the gangplank and rushed off in the direction of the train for Paris, which was awaiting the travelers.

Tom followed her at a more leisurely pace, for he knew that there was no danger of their being left, but he took good care not to lose sight of her.

She entered a second-class carriage, and he followed her and seated himself opposite her.

She gave him one sharp look, but Tom saw that she did not penetrate his disguise; then she relapsed into a reverie.

While awaiting the departure of the train, our hero saw Gussie Smythe, pale and woe-begone from his recent experience, pass the window on his way to a first-class carriage, leaning heavily on the arm of his mother, whose face was full of solicitude for his welfare.

And behind them walked the adventuress, Mrs. Maxwell, smiling very broadly at the suffering dude.

For a time the Frenchwoman, who, beside Tom, was the only occupant of the railroad carriage, sat apparently buried in meditation. Then her eyes closed and she fell into a doze.

Until the train reached Paris she remained asleep, but when it came to a standstill she was wide awake in an instant.

Her dark eyes blazing with furious anticipation, she seized the little traveling-bag that lay upon the seat beside her, and descended from the carriage.

With quick, nervous steps she hurried away, followed by Tom.

But again our hero was destined to have an encounter with Gussie Smythe.

So great was his anxiety not to lose sight of Felice Duval, that he was oblivious to all his surroundings.

Gussie, who had evidently recovered from his temporary indisposition, and was ready for a new career of conquest, was bowling along, swinging his big stick in all directions, regardless of the convenience of his fellow-travelers.

Tom in his haste, got within range of the stick, which every one else in the vicinity was trying to avoid, and received a blow from it just under the chin.

This aroused him to a realizing sense of his position, and also awakened the temper which, as the reader is aware, was a part of his make-up.

"Confound you!" he exclaimed, addressing Gussie, who had

looked around in indignation that any one should have ventured within six feet of him, even in a crowded railway station; "why don't you keep your cane to yourself?"

For the moment he forgot his disguise, and "gave himself away."

A light appeared in Gussie's eyes.

"B-ba Jove!" he exclaimed, "it's that little beggar, Tom Woods."

Mrs. Smythe glared at the boy.

"So it's you, is it, you young scoundrel?" she hissed. "What does this masquerading mean?"

"Ba Jove!" went on Gussie, "he's got on a false mustache. He's following us, mamma, don'tcher know?"

"So I perceive," responded Mrs. Smythe, with all the austerity she could assume. "Now, see here, young man," she added, turning to Tom and seizing him by the coatsleeve, "I want you to understand that I will not endure this sort of thing, and that if you persist in following my son and myself I shall hand you over to the police."

This little scene had created a block, and murmurs both loud and deep arose from the throng.

In the meantime Felice Duval was making her way out of the depot, and Tom was growing decidedly nervous.

"I am not following you," he said, "and for your own sake I advise you not to attempt to hand me over to the police."

As he spoke he pushed through the crowd and made the best of his way to the entrance through which Felice Duval had just disappeared.

But his words alarmed Mrs. Smythe not a little.

Grasping her son's arms, she exclaimed in an agitated voice:

"Gussie, darling."

"Ya-as, mamma."

"He knows about the will; at least he suspects."

"Yaw think so?"

"Lose not a moment. Follow him, see where he goes, and then return to me. You will find me at the Hotel A——."

This was enough for the dude; he started off at a double-quick pace.

Tom, in the meantime, had reached the outside of the depot, but Felice Duval had disappeared.

Pale with chagrin, he gazed in all directions, but the woman was nowhere to be seen.

In his rage he felt like turning back and giving Gussie a sound thrashing.

Suddenly a sight met his gaze which caused him to forget all about the dude.

There was a block in the throng of vehicles surrounding the station, and among the carriages were several coupés.

From the window of one of these the head of a woman protruded, and a sharp voice addressed some question to the driver—probably a query as to the cause of the delay.

It was the face and the voice of Felice Duval.

Just at this moment the vehicle—a heavy truck—which had blocked the way, moved on, and the coupé started.

Hurriedly approaching one of the dozen or more hackmen who stood near the entrance to the station, Tom asked:

"Can you follow that coupé yonder?"

The man shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands, with a deprecatory smile, and Tom suddenly remembered that he was not in an English-speaking country.

There was not another instant to be lost.

He would follow the vehicle on foot!

In pursuance of this resolution our hero started at the top of his speed after the carriage.

At the same moment Gussie emerged from the station, and, catching sight of the boy, jumped into one of the cabs, saying to the driver, in very tolerable French:

"Follow that boy—don't lose sight of him!"

CHAPTER XXII.

IN THE SLUMS OF PARIS.

Had it not been for the fact that the street was so densely crowded that the driver of the coupé containing Felice Duval was forced to bring his vehicle to a standstill every few minutes, it is doubtful that Tom could have followed the Frenchwoman.

While standing in front of a café, out of sight of the Frenchwoman, he was surprised to see the face of Gussie Smythe peering at him from the window of a carriage.

In an instant it flashed upon him that the dude was shadowing him, as he was shadowing Felice Duval.

He was more amused than angry at this discovery, and also a little puzzled as to Gussie's motive in following him.

He quickly decided to throw his pursuer off the track.

It was evident that the throng of vehicles could not move on for some minutes; he resolved to risk losing sight of the Frenchwoman for a brief time for the sake of thwarting Gussie.

Accordingly he started off at a rapid pace for the next street, and as he disappeared around the corner had the satisfaction of seeing the dude leap out of the cab and toss a coin to the driver.

He had scarcely turned the corner when he darted into a store—a baker's—the first he came to.

The next moment Gussie rushed by in great excitement, and Tom saw his lips form the familiar words:

"Ba Jove!"

Having made some trifling purchase our hero hurried from the store.

As he stepped out he saw Gussie at some distance down the street standing and gazing about him in evident bewilderment.

It was easy enough for Tom to escape his observation and to re-enter the main thoroughfare, where the vehicles were now beginning to move on.

An idea occurred to him. He signaled the driver of the coupé just vacated by Gussie, and strove by pantomime to make the man understand that he wanted him to follow Felice Duval's carriage.

To his surprise the driver interrupted him with:

"Say, you ain't deaf an' dumb, are you?"

"You speak English?" cried Tom.

"Yes, I am English. I'm only in Paris because my wife's a Frenchwoman an' won't live anywhere else. But I'm no frog-eater. You see, my family——"

But Tom cut short his personal reminiscences by telling him what he wanted and leaped into the carriage.

Perhaps twenty minutes later the driver reined up his horse.

Tom's surroundings reminded him of some of the worst quarters of New York and Boston.

"This is a tough neighborhood, sir," said the driver, in a low tone. "If you are not acquainted in Paris, I don't like to leave you here. There isn't a neighborhood in London the equal of this."

"I'm not in the least afraid," interrupted Tom. "Where is the woman?"

"There she goes yonder, sir; but if I were you I wouldn't follow her in that direction; it may be as much as your life's worth."

But Tom again interrupted him impatiently, inquired the

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amount of his fare, paid him, and hurried away in the direction taken by Felice Duval, who was now some distance ahead of him.

Never, with all his experience as a street waif, had Tom witnessed such scenes of degradation as now met his eyes as he hurried on in pursuit of the woman, who, with quick, nervous tread, was plunging into the very midst of the slums.

Felice Duval evidently as a precautionary measure, had dismissed her carriage at some distance from the objective point of her journey.

At last, when perhaps a hundred rods from our hero, she paused, gave a quick look around her, and disappeared in a dingy, ancient-looking brick building, the door of which stood open.

Tom quickened his pace, and in a few minutes entered the dark hallway into which Felice Duval had disappeared.

Not a sound disturbed the stillness of the building; the silence seemed, to the boy's excited and overstrained imagination, almost ominous.

With noiseless footsteps he ascended the flight of stairs that confronted him and occupied nearly the entire width of the dark hallway.

When he reached its head the sound of voices in excited discussion met his ears.

His heart gave a bound, for he recognized the voices as those of Felice Duval and Achille Dupont, the riding teacher.

The couple were evidently in a room at the rear of the house. Tom hurried to the door and listened intently.

Every word that was uttered was distinctly audible to him.

"Now you keep cool, my lady," he heard Dupont say, "and I'll tell you all about it."

"Why do you not speak in ze French?" hissed the woman.

"In the first place, because one language is the same as the other to me," was the reply, "and in the second place, because I don't care to have our conversation understood by others."

"Who could overhear us?"

"Old Marianne is in the next room, but she doesn't understand a word of English. I don't care to let her know too much."

"Enough! Well, go on with your explanation—which I foresee will be no explanation at all. You promised not to leave Londres without me."

"I know it, but I had to. You are here, we are together again, so what difference does it make?"

"You meant to play me false."

"I did not; I needed you, the girl needed you, and does now."

"Ah! Where is she?"

"In the next room with old Marianne."

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN THE ENEMY'S POWER.

Tom could not doubt that the girl to whom the two wretches referred was Beatrice Gresham.

His first impulse was to rush into the room and attempt her rescue at once.

But, realizing that such an attempt could only result in failure, he restrained his impatience, and with wildly beating heart listened.

"Why did you have to leave Londres wizout me?" persisted the Frenchwoman.

"Did you have any trouble wiz ze girl?"

"Oh, no; she was under the influence of the drug all the time."

"And you are going to keep your promise to me?"

"Of course I am."

"I s'all have ten thousand francs?"

"When Beatrice Gresham is my wife you will receive ten thousand francs. Don't worry, Felice; you'll get the money."

"If she should refuse?"

"But she won't refuse. How can she? All the world believes that she has eloped with me; she is hopelessly compromised. She must consent to marry me."

"But if she does not?"

"If she does not at first, we'll keep her a prisoner until she does. Oh, Achille Dupont has plenty of patience."

Felice went on to inform her companion of Tom's cross-examination of the servants.

* "Curse him!" exclaimed Dupont, "that's bad news."

At this moment a loud shriek rang through the house.

"Help! Help!"

With a thrill Tom recognized the voice of Beatrice Gresham. Dupont uttered an oath.

"She's beginning to recover from the effects of the opiate. Perhaps it's just as well, Felice; it's time she and I arrived at an understanding."

"Does she know where she is?" asked the woman.

"No. She has been in a half-unconscious condition ever since she arrived here."

"Help! Help!" again came the cry, in Beatrice Gresham's voice, followed by a sound as of blows.

"Curse that old hag, Marianne!" exclaimed Dupont; "she's been beating the girl."

This was too much for Tom.

Forgetting the odds against him, thinking only of Beatrice Gresham's peril, he burst into the room.

The Frenchman and his companion were just making their entrance into the apartment from which the sound of Beatrice's cries proceeded.

Dupont turned, and an expression of rage appeared upon his wrinkled face.

As for Felice Duval, she uttered a shrill cry of anger, and sprung toward the boy.

"Help! Help!" came from the adjoining room again; and the appeal was mingled with the sound of a cracked female voice, pitched high with anger.

Tom brushed the Frenchman aside and sprung into the other room.

The sight that met his gaze was one that would have inspired any heart with pity.

Upon the floor knelt Beatrice Gresham, her beautiful hair streaming in tangled luxuriance upon her naked shoulders, her lovely eyes upturned appealingly to the face of a wrinkled old hag who held aloft a heavy stick which was evidently about to descend.

"Tom, Tom, is it indeed you?" cried the girl, a ray of hope illuminating her pale features.

The next moment, overcome with emotion, she sank unconscious at the feet of her persecutor.

His eyes blazing with indignation and anger, Tom rushed forward and wrested the weapon from the old woman's grasp.

But scarcely had he done so when he received a blow upon the back of the head which felled him to the floor, where he remained motionless.

"Well done, Achille!" cried Felice in her native tongue. "He will never trouble us again."

When Tom recovered consciousness, total darkness environed him.

Faint and bewildered he stretched out his hand.

It came in contact with a cold, damp surface. The recollection of what had occurred slowly returned to him as he staggered to his feet.

Where was he?

He walked a few paces, and came in violent contact with a stone wall.

In a few moments he discovered that he was imprisoned in a circular dungeon, not more than eight feet in diameter.

He did not guess the awful fate to which he had been consigned by the vile wretches into whose power he had so blindly rushed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A MIRACULOUS INTERPOSITION.

Tom was a smoker, and he suddenly bethought himself of the fact that he had a full box of matches in his pocket.

He lighted one of them and gazed curiously at his surroundings.

The circular walls which encompassed him were of stone and covered with slime, the floor was of cement and littered with débris.

It was evidently an underground apartment.

On one side of the dungeon was a door, which the boy attempted to open, but it resisted all his efforts.

The flickering light of the match died out, and Tom was in darkness again.

A strange, ominous silence reigned.

A shiver agitated the boy's frame.

To what fate had he been consigned by these wretches?

Suddenly the sound of distant footsteps saluted his ears.

They came nearer and nearer, and at last paused before the door of the dungeon.

A key was inserted in the lock, and the next moment the door was thrown open.

Achille Dupont entered, a lantern in his hand.

With a malicious, triumphant smile upon his evil face, he said: "Well, my little Yankee, your clever scheme has miscarried, you see. You have simply rushed to your own destruction, and done no good at all to the estimable young lady who will shortly become my wife."

"Your wife!" exclaimed Tom, passionately. "Never!"

Dupont laughed.

"Indeed? And who will prevent it?"

"I will."

Again the Frenchman indulged in a harsh peal of laughter.

"Do you know where you are?" he said.

"How should I know?" responded Tom, who maintained an undaunted front, although he fully realized that he was in the power of a villain from whom he could expect no mercy.

"I will tell you; you are in a cell under one of the streets of Paris, a cell made for just such purposes as this. Above your head roll hundreds of vehicles every hour, but you cannot hear them. You are in a living tomb, my young friend—a prison from which there is no escape, and here you will remain until you starve to death."

It cannot be denied that these words struck terror to Tom's heart, but in no way did he betray his feelings.

"I have no fear of such a fate," he said, quietly.

"You haven't, eh?"

"No."

As he spoke, Tom made a sudden rush for the door.

But Dupont seized him by the shoulder with a grip of iron, and pressed the cold muzzle of a revolver against his temple.

"That'll do, my fine fellow," he hissed in the boy's ear. "You won't get away quite as easily as that. Stop!" as Tom made a movement of resistance. "Keep quiet, or by heaven I'll send a bullet through your brain."

Tom offered no further resistance, seeing that it would be useless, and hoping for another opportunity to effect his escape.

"Now look well at me, Tom Woods," said Dupont, picking up his lantern, "for mine is the last human face you will ever see."

For a few moments he stood gazing into the boy's face; then he closed, and locked the heavy door, and Tom was in darkness again.

The Frenchman's footsteps grew fainter and fainter in the distance, and in a few moments their sound died away altogether.

Then, when alone in the darkness and the silence, a full realization of his position burst upon Tom for the first time.

For hours he paced the narrow confines of his dungeon, and was about to resign himself to sleep once more, when the sound of footsteps again greeted his ears.

Tom listened intently.

Suddenly he heard a voice outside his door.

"Tom! Tom!"

It was Vinton's voice!

"I am here, Vinton!" cried the boy.

"Thank heaven I have found you!" returned Vinton, fervently. "Wait a few moments, and I will get you out of this accursed place."

He tried a number of keys in the lock, but none of them fitted.

"Ah," said the young man, "here is an ax. Stand out of the way, Tom—I'm going to break down the door."

Two or three blows shattered the lock, and the door swung open, revealing to the grateful eyes of the boy the form of his friend.

Upon the floor beside Vinton was a lighted lantern, the same that Dupont had used.

"How did you find me?" asked Tom. "By what miracle were you guided to this place?"

"It was a miracle," said Vinton, gravely. "But this is no time for explanations—I will tell you all later. We have a duty to perform now—we must save Miss Beatrice."

"She is in this house, Vinton," began Tom.

"I know it," interrupted the young man; "but she must not remain here a moment longer than we can help. She is alone with an old hag upstairs now—Dupont and the Duval woman have gone out. Now is our time to rescue her. Come!"

Tom followed his friend from the cell. Together they traversed a long passageway and ascended a flight of stairs, which brought them to the ground floor of the dwelling.

Arrived at the head of the second flight, a loud scream saluted their ears, followed by the sound of the voice of the old woman, Marianne, in angry expostulation.

His face pale with rage and excitement, Vinton put his shoulder to the door of the room in which the baronet's daughter was imprisoned.

The lock broke, the door flew open, and the two young men rushed into the room.

The sight that met their eyes forced simultaneous cries of indignation from their lips.

The old hag, Marianne, was dragging the refined, lovely daughter of Sir George Gresham about the room by the hair.

The poor girl, who seemed to be in a semi-conscious state, was moaning and uttering incoherent pleas for mercy.

As Tom and his companion entered the room the woman turned and confronted them, her eyes blazing with fury.

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Vinton rushed forward and forced her to relinquish her hold upon Beatrice.

She was a powerfully built, wiry old woman, and her rage lent her strength; Vinton had all he could do to defend himself.

"Give me that rope, Tom;" he panted, indicating a roll of cord that lay in one corner of the room.

The boy did so, and assisted his friend to tie the old woman securely to a chair.

Then, paying no attention to the hag's threats and curses, Vinton lifted the form of Beatrice, who had fainted, in his arms, saying:

"Come, Tom, the sooner we get out of this den the better."

But as he spoke a脚步 sounded outside, and the next moment Achille Dupont entered the room.

CHAPTER XXV.

RESCUED.

Dupont comprehended the situation at a glance.

With a fierce cry of rage he rushed toward Vinton.

But just before he reached him out went Tom's fist, and down went the Frenchman like a log.

"Good!" exclaimed Vinton, in a voice of satisfaction. "Now, then, let's get out of this quickly, before the scoundrel recovers his senses."

And he hurried from the room, bearing the inanimate form of Beatrice in his arms.

Tom followed him.

As they emerged from the house the sound of a shot reached their ears.

It chanced that just as they reached the street two *gendarmes* (French policemen) were passing.

Vinton uttered a few sharp, authoritative words to them in French—of which language he was a master—and they rushed into the house.

The two young men did not stop to see the result of their visit.

A cab stood near the door, and Tom recognized its driver as the man whom he had employed to follow Felice Duval.

Vinton placed the unconscious girl in the vehicle, seated himself by her side and motioned Tom to follow him.

"I fancied that those policemen seemed to know you," said Tom.

"They did," said Vinton, quietly. "My life has been an adventurous one, and a year or two ago I did some confidential work for the French detective service; one of those men was an associate of mine. They are brave fellows, and will stand no nonsense from Dupont."

"How does it happen that you are here?" questioned Tom. "I was told that you had been arrested on suspicion that you were concerned in Miss Beatrice's abduction."

Vinton smiled.

"So I was, but I had a very easy time to prove my entire innocence. Sir George himself scouted the idea, and I was released within a few hours after my arrest. Sir George, by the way, is in Paris."

"Sir George Gresham here!"

"Yes, he is at the Hotel A——, where he is impatiently awaiting my return. He came because, after I told him what you had discovered in London, he felt convinced that his daughter had been brought by Dupont to Paris."

"But how did you find me, Vinton?"

"That was indeed almost a miracle. While making inquiries at the depot to see if I could trace you, fate brought me in con-

tact with the driver of this hack. He remembered having driven you to the Rue ——, and informed me that he told you that the neighborhood was a dangerous one, and advised you to follow Felice Duval no further."

"Yes, he did."

"You did not heed his advice, and in his anxiety for your welfare—for it seems that he took quite a fancy to you—he followed you and saw you enter the house from which I have just rescued you."

"Well?"

"Well, I told him to drive me to the place and he did so. I had no trouble in effecting an entrance; and standing outside the door of the room in which we found Miss Beatrice, I overheard a conversation between Dupont and the woman, Felice Duval."

"My own experience."

"By this conversation I learned that Miss Beatrice was a prisoner in that room, and that you were confined in a dungeon where it was the intention of the wretches to starve you to death. Of course I resolved to save you both."

"What did you do, Vinton?"

"I concealed myself in a closet in the hallway until Dupont and the woman went out, which they did in a few minutes, as I knew from their conversation they intended. Then taking a lantern that I found in the closet, I started in search of you. The rest you know. And let me tell you, my boy, we have rescued their victim just in time, for it was their intention to take her to the country to-morrow, to a village some fifty miles from Paris, where they believed they would be safe from pursuit, and where it was planned to force her into a marriage with Dupont."

At this moment the carriage halted in front of the Hotel A——, a house much frequented by American and English travelers.

As Vinton dismounted, the still unconscious girl in his arms, his attention was accidentally attracted by a face in an upper window—the face of a woman.

His countenance became deathly pale, he staggered, and Beatrice would have fallen from his arms had not Tom caught her in his own.

"What's the matter, Vinton?" cried the boy. "Are you ill?"

"It is nothing—nothing," replied Vinton, controlling himself by a mighty effort. "That is, Tom, I will tell you at another time. Come, let us go to Sir George."

As they bore the girl into the hotel they were met by the baronet, who seized his daughter in his arms and rained tears and kisses upon her pale, immobile face.

"I will take her to her room, gentlemen," said Sir George, addressing Vinton and Tom. "I beg that you will come to us in an hour, and let my daughter thank you in person; I am sure that by that time she will be sufficiently recovered to do so."

Tom and his companion bowed; and Vinton, drawing his arm through Tom's, led him out of the hotel.

When they reached the sidewalk, the young man again glanced up to the window in which he had seen the woman's face.

"Gone!" he muttered.

Tom gazed inquiringly at him.

"I will tell you the cause of my emotion just now," Vinton said. "I saw in that window a face very familiar to me in by-gone days—a face which I have not seen for years."

"And one which you were not particularly well pleased to see to-day," ventured Tom.

"You are right, for it was the face of a woman who has caused me much suffering—the woman whom I married years ago."

"Your wife!" exclaimed the boy.

"She who bears that name. And if I am not mistaken, she

was no better pleased to see me than I was her. Ah, Tom! the sight of that face recalls me to myself. I must dream no more of Beatrice Gresham; I must leave Paris, and learn to forget her."

A long silence followed.

Later on the story of Beatrice's abduction was briefly told by the girl

She had been induced by Felice Duval, her maid, whom she had implicitly trusted, to visit a Frenchwoman in one of the poorer quarters of London, whom Felice alleged was dying of consumption, and was a worthy object of charity.

While in this woman's room she was induced to drink a glass of wine.

Scarcely a minute had passed when she felt a strange, drowsy sensation stealing over her.

She saw her companions curiously watching her, and the truth burst upon her

The wine had been drugged!

She arose to her feet, but the next moment sunk into Felice Duval's arms, unconscious.

After that she could remember but little.

Sir George urged both the young men to return to London with him and remain his guests for an indefinite time.

But both Tom and Vinton declined the kindly invitation.

Vinton dared not trust himself in Beatrice's presence; and Tom, having accomplished his self-imposed task, was anxious to continue his journey.

As they left the baronet's presence, Sir George placed in Vinton's hand a small, square package, and in Tom's a sealed envelope.

"Two trifling tokens of remembrance and gratitude," he said.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

Tom and his companion went to the latter's room in the hotel. When they were alone Vinton opened the package which Sir George had given him.

It contained a gold watch, studded with diamonds.

"By Jove!" exclaimed the young man, "Sir George is a brick. Why, this is simply magnificent. But let us see what he has given you, Tom."

Our hero tore open the envelope and drew out a folded paper, inclosing a bank note.

"A thousand-pound note, my boy!" cried Vinton. "Sir George doesn't go things by halves."

For some time Tom hesitated about accepting the money, but Vinton at last induced him to do so.

"Now then, Tom, what's your programme?" asked Vinton.

"My programme?"

"Yes—where are you going next?"

"Well, I want to visit some of the more important French cities, then Switzerland, and after that I don't know what—Austria, I suppose, though perhaps I may go back to the British Isles. My original intention was to spend a good many weeks in England, Ireland and Scotland. And now about yourself—what do you intend to do, Vinton?"

"I don't know; should you object to me as a traveling companion?"

"Object—" began Tom.

Vinton interrupted him with a laugh.

"Enough! Your face answers for you. Then we will travel together."

"Agreed!"

The two youths clasped hands.

Fifteen minutes later, as the two friends sat in an ante-room adjoining one of the parlors, gazing curiously out of the window at the hurrying throngs in the street below, Vinton started, grasped Tom's arm, and exclaimed:

"Do you see that woman entering the carriage at the door? She is my wife."

It was Tom's turn to start now.

"She? You're joking, Vinton."

"What do you mean?—have you ever seen her before?"

"Indeed I have. Why, Vinton, that is the woman who claims to be the wife of my foster-father, Mr. Maxwell."

Vinton started to his feet.

"Are you sure you are not mistaken?"

"Of course I am."

"When did she marry Mr. Maxwell?"

"About a year ago, I think she said."

"Then the marriage was an illegal one, for she was my wife then."

"Then she has gotten possession of the fortune by fraud."

"Yes. I wish to heaven that my ability to prove the fact would help you any. Tom; but unluckily the only one it can benefit is this Mrs. Smythe, who is certainly as unworthy of the fortune as the other woman."

"True."

"Well, we'll let Mrs. Smythe find out the truth whenever and however she can. But, Tom!"

"Well?"

"I must follow that woman. I must have an interview with her. She recognized me, and is fleeing from me. I will confront her face to face. Let us go to the office and learn her destination."

They did so.

"Madame Maxwell has gone to Switzerland—to Berne," they were told.

"I will follow her" said Vinton in a hoarse whisper to Tom. "Painful as it will be, I must have an interview with her. Will you go with me?"

"Of course I will, if you wish it."

"I do, indeed, wish it. Then let us start at the earliest possible moment."

CHAPTER XXVII.

AN UNLUCKY ACCIDENT.

Mrs. Maxwell had caused the fastidious and aristocratic Mrs. Smythe and her hopeful son, Gussie, intense annoyance by her persistent pursuit of them.

Imagine therefore, her relief when, about an hour before the events with which our last chapter closes, Mrs. Maxwell entered her room with a very pale face, and said in a manner which plainly showed that she was struggling to conceal some strong emotion:

"Well, I'm going to leave you."

Mrs. Smythe stared at her in speechless amazement.

"You don't seem as glad as I thought you'd be," went on the adventuress in the same nervous manner. "Perhaps you'd rather I'd stay with you?"

"Where are you going?" asked Mrs. Smythe, partially recovering from her astonishment.

"Oh, I'm going to make a tour of the Continent—Switzerland, the Alps, and all that sort of thing, you know. We shall meet before we return to America, I suppose; I'm sure I hope so. I shall miss you and Gussie—dear Gussie!—so much."

"B-ba Jove!" gasped Gussie.

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"I'm sure I hope not!" snapped Mrs. Smythe.

"Really?" drawled the adventuress. "Oh, I'm sure you don't mean it. But I've no time to stand here talking, even to my two best friends. I must pack and be off. You'll excuse me, won't you?"

And with a mock courtesy she swept out of the room.

"Worthless hussy!" hissed Mrs. Smythe. "Gussie!"

"Ya-as, mamma."

"Let's go down to the parlor, so that we may be out of the way when she goes."

"A good ideah, don'tcher know, mamma."

They descended to the parlors; and, as it happened, were in the adjoining room when the conversation between Tom and Vinton regarding Vinton's wife occurred.

They both listened intently, and once Gussie gave utterance to a low:

"Ba Jove!"

A look from his mother quieted him, and neither Tom nor his friend happened to hear the exclamtion.

But when the two young men were gone he repeated the words:

"Ba-ba Jove, mamma!"

Mrs. Smythe drew a long breath.

"She is not my brother's widow at all."

"And the property's all ours, don'tcher know, mamma."

Mrs. Smythe fairly ground her teeth.

"I was fool enough to tell her about the will which leaves the property to this boy, Tom Woods."

"Ba—— I mean what are you going to do, mamma?"

"I don't know—yes, I do; I'll follow the woman and frighten her into accepting a few hundred dollars and resigning all claim to the property."

"But she hasn't any claim to the property."

"No; but I don't dare make that fact public, for then she'd tell what she knows about the will."

"But this first husband of hers will make it public, don'tcher know."

"True, Gussie. Oh, this is a dreadful perplexing position. But I won't give up the fortune; I won't—I won't!"

And Mrs. Smythe paced the floor in great excitement, Gussie following her with his eyes, and exclaiming beneath his breath:

"Ba Jove!"

Suddenly his mother turned sharply upon him.

"We've spent enough time in talking; go down to the office and find out, if you can, this wretched creature's exact destination."

"Ya-as, mamma."

"And learn the name of this first husband of hers."

In the meantime Tom and Vinton were making their preparations.

They were simple ones, consisting merely in packing a couple of small handbags, and were soon completed.

In a few minutes they stood at the entrance to the hotel, awaiting the arrival of the carriage that was to convey them to the depot.

A moment later down came Mrs. Smythe and Gussie, attired for their journey, the handle of the dude's cane being thrust half-way down his throat, in accordance with his invariable custom.

"So they're going away, too," commented Tom.

"That reminds me!" said Vinton. "They just told me at the office that this fellow, Gussie, as they call him, has been making inquiries about me."

"Perhaps," suggested Tom, "they have got an inkling of the true state of affairs."

"But how could they?"

"They might have overheard our conversation in the parlor."

"By Jove, I believe you've hit it, Tom. Suppose they, too, should intend following the adventuress?"

"Well, in that case we shall have to keep our eyes on the lot of them."

"Just so."

In the meantime Mrs. Smythe and her son, who stood at some distance waiting for their carriage, were staring at the two young men.

"Gussie!" snapped the old lady.

"Ya-as, mamma."

"I forgot to ask you if you learned that fellow's name?"

"Ya-as, mamma."

"Well, what is it?"

"Vinton, don'tcher know—Sydney Vinton."

Mrs. Smythe started.

"Sydney Vinton!"

"Ya-as, mamma."

"Why, he must be the same man that that fellow, Dick Danton, on board the steamer referred to."

"I don't know what yaw're talking about, mamma."

"Don't you remember my telling you about a certain Dick Danton who was a friend of this so-called Mrs. Maxwell, and who mysteriously disappeared just before I could have an interview with him?"

"Oh, ya-as."

"Well, he referred in a mysterious way to a certain 'Syd,' and I have no doubt that this Vinton is the man."

"Ba Jove!"

Just then their carriage drew up, and they were ushered to its door by the obsequious servants of the hotel, whom Gussie rewarded with a good-sized "tip."

"Ba Jove!" exclaimed the dude a moment later in a startled tone as he gazed out of the window.

"What is the matter, Gussie?" demanded his mother.

"Why, mamma, that fellah, Vinton, don'tcher know, fell down just as he was trying to get into his carriage. His blooming foot slipped, ye know."

"What is that to us?" said Mrs. Smythe, heartlessly. "I only hope he is disabled for the journey."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE BEGINNING OF AN EVENTFUL JOURNEY.

As Gussie Smythe had said, Vinton's foot had slipped just as he was in the act of stepping into the carriage which was to have conveyed him to the railway station.

He fell heavily to the pavement. As he did not immediately arise, Tom, who had already entered the carriage, sprung out and assisted him to his feet.

"Are you hurt, Vinton?" the boy asked, anxiously, noticing the pallor of his companion's face.

"I'm afraid I've sprained my ankle, Tom," was the faint reply. "But no matter—help me into the carriage. I will go on at any cost. I——"

But even as he spoke his countenance grew ghastly, he staggered, and fell, unconscious, into Tom's arms.

He had fainted from pain.

Much alarmed, our hero bore him into the hotel.

Here he was relieved of his burden by a servant, who bore the injured man to his room.

A doctor who resided in the hotel was at once summoned; before he arrived Vinton had regained his senses.

"A bad sprain," said the physician. "It will be some little time before you get out."

When the doctor was gone, Vinton said:

"Tom, this is hard luck."

"It is, indeed, Vinton."

"I would not have missed seeing that woman for all the money I have in the world."

"I was not thinking of that, Vinton. It is hard luck to sprain your ankle; as for the woman, you can see her some other time."

"But, Tom, you cannot guess my burning anxiety to see her now."

"Why are you so anxious?"

"Because a hope, almost a conviction, has sprung up in my heart that by having an interview with her I may be able to secure some means of release from the hated bonds that unite my life to hers. How, I cannot tell; but I want to see her, to question her, to force from her the secrets of her heart. I was but a boy when I became her victim; I am a man now, and I love Beatrice Gresham."

"Vinton," said Tom, taking his friend's hand, "will you intrust this mission to me?"

"To you, Tom?"

"Yes. I will follow the woman, question her, and perhaps bring back good news to you."

"Tom, you could not do it."

"I am sorry you have not more confidence in me, Vinton; but I am going to prove to you that I can do it. I haven't 'roughed it' so many years without getting some knowledge of the world."

"I know it, Tom, but—"

At this moment there came a light tap upon the door.

Tom opened it, and confronted Sir George Gresham and his daughter.

"We have just heard of your accident, Vinton, my boy," said the baronet, stepping to the couch where the young man lay, and grasping his hand, "and need not assure you that we are heartily sorry. However, we must make the best of it, and I have brought Beatrice, who insists upon nursing you."

"If you will permit me," added the young lady, approaching the couch.

"I—I could not think," stammered Vinton, a crimson flush replacing his pallor.

"Then don't try to," laughed the baronet. "Of course we shall not return to England until you are fully recovered. Beatrice and her maid will do their best to make you comfortable, and perhaps I can lend a hand myself once in a while."

"You are very kind, Sir George," said Tom at this point, "and have relieved my mind a good deal, for I want to start at once for Switzerland on business, but could not bear to leave my friend."

"Good luck to you, my boy, and a safe return," said Sir George.

In a few minutes Tom's adieus were made and he was on his way to the station, having first disguised himself by donning a mustache, an imperial, and a pair of eye-glasses, the effect of which was to make him look at least five years older than he really was.

He had not expected to catch the train upon which Mrs. Maxwell was a passenger; but it happened that it was delayed by an accident to the engine, and he was just in time to secure a seat in a first-class compartment.

As luck would have it, he found himself seated directly opposite Mrs. Maxwell, who glanced apprehensively at him as he entered, but evidently did not recognize him.

It was plain that she stood in wholesome fear of Sydney Vinton, as well she might.

On his way to his compartment, Tom had seen the face of Gussie Smythe at the window of another carriage; but this time the dude had plainly no suspicion of his identity.

In his new and hurriedly improved disguise, Tom looked like a young Frenchman of leisure, and was as direct a contrast to the Boston newsboy of a year ago as could be imagined.

Besides our hero and the adventuress, the compartment contained four men—one, old, gray-bearded and handsomely dressed; another, who sat next to Tom, apparently about thirty years of age, with a heavy black beard; and two young Englishmen, attired as tourists.

Tom could not help noticing that the eyes of the two first-mentioned travelers were fixed almost constantly upon the face of Mrs. Maxwell.

Occasionally the old man's brows would contract, a fierce light would gleam in his eyes, and Tom would fancy he was about to address the woman.

But he would seem to control himself by a strong effort and sink back in his seat, muttering inaudibly to himself.

Tom watched him curiously until his attention was attracted by a remark made by one of the Englishmen to his companion:

"Have you heard of the murder on the Rue —— this morning, Harry?"

"No; there's always something of the sort going on in that quarter. Who was the victim this time?"

"An old woman named Marianne Lascelles. She was shot by one Achille Dupont."

To the surprise of every one, Tom most of all, Mrs. Maxwell started violently, and exclaimed:

"Achille Dupont!"

"Yes, madam," replied the Englishman, politely, "that is the assassin's name."

"Has he been captured?"

"After a desperate fight with two gendarmes, he escaped, but they have hopes of recapturing him soon."

"I hope they will," hissed the woman, through her clinched teeth. "I hope he will be punished as he deserves—the wretch!"

Her vehemence surprised all who heard her; and Tom again saw the same fierce gleam in the old man's eyes, and noticed that his bony hands were tightly clinched, as if it cost him a physical effort to control his anger.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SCENE SHIFTS.

One evening, not many days later, a party of travelers were gathered around the fire in the famous old convent of Great St. Bernard, situated in the lofty Alps.

A strangely assorted party it was.

It consisted of Mrs. Maxwell, Mrs. Smythe, the ever-present Gussie, the two men whom Tom had particularly noticed in the railway carriage on the day of his departure from Paris, and—last, but not least—Tom himself.

In the center of the room was a long table, which two of the good fathers, whose hospitality is world-wide, were engaged in "setting" for the benefit of their guests, not one of whom they had ever seen before in their lives.

A strange journey had been that of this band of pilgrims.

Almost from the first Tom had suspected that the old man he had seen in the railway compartment and the black-bearded stranger of thirty to whom we have referred were, like himself following Mrs. Maxwell.

BRAVE AND BOLD.

For he noticed that their destination, like his own, seemed to be regulated by her movements.

If she took a certain conveyance they took it, too; if she changed her route they changed theirs.

And yet to all appearance they were strangers.

Of course, being fellow-travelers for some days, they all engaged more or less upon various topics of interest.

The old man gave his name as John Swift, and stated that he was a retired English merchant who was traveling for his health; the other represented himself to be a wealthy American making the "grand tour," and said that his name was Marsden.

But Tom could not help suspecting that both these names were assumed, and that their owners were adventurers who would "stand watching."

As for himself, it became necessary for him to assume a name, so he took that of Frank Thornton, and gave his companions to understand that he was traveling simply for pleasure.

"Ba Jove!" whined Gussie, moving as close to the fire as he possibly could, "it's deucedly cold heah, don'tcher know."

"Better not get much nearer that fire," suggested Marsden in a joking way, "or you may fall in."

"He wouldn't burn if he did," said Mrs. Maxwell, slangily—"he's too fresh."

"Ba Jove!" ejaculated Gussie, feebly.

"Such remarks are in exceedingly poor taste," said Mrs. Smythe, stiffly.

"In your opinion; you mean," sneered the adventuress.

"Mrs. Maxwell," returned Mrs. Smythe in her most frigid manner, "may I have the pleasure of a few words with you in private after supper?"

"If it'll be any pleasure to you, you may," was the ready reply.

"Now," thought the adventuress, "it's coming! We shall see who will win—this pale-faced, stuck-up creature, or I. I've outwitted many a smarter woman than she, and it will be mighty hard luck if I can't outwit her."

The plain, wholesome supper, washed down by copious draughts of red wine, was over in due time; and half an hour later the two women began their conversation, little guessing that Tom Woods, otherwise "Frank Thornton," was concealed behind a screen, beside which they sat, listening to every word they uttered.

"At last we can come to an understanding," said Mrs. Smythe, a ring of triumph in her voice as she confronted the woman she so bitterly hated.

"I know that you are the legal wife of Sydney Vinton, from whom even now you are hiding."

"I haven't forgotten about that will leaving the property to the boy, Tom Woods, which you so kindly exhibited to me."

Tom listened with deepest interest.

His suspicions, then, were well founded. Mr. Maxwell had made him his heir!

"By the way, where is the document?" added Mrs. Maxwell.

"Eh?" ejaculated Mrs. Smythe, in surprise at the unexpected question.

Her companion repeated the query.

"It is in the charge of my son, Gussie," replied Mrs. Smythe, stiffly.

"Now, to get to the point at once, we'd better stick to our present arrangement, and each of us hold our tongue."

"Yes, but your husband, this Vinton, may not hold his."

Mrs. Smythe repeated the conversation she had overheard between Tom and Vinton.

"And now let us return to the rest of the company, for they are observing us."

A few moments later Tom found an opportunity to slip out of his place of concealment unobserved.

The remainder of the party were gathered around the big, open fireplace, and no one noticed him as he quietly left the room.

If the will was in Gussie Smythe's possession our hero determined that he would gain possession of it, and he was about to make an attempt to do so.

Gussie was doing something very unusual for him—attempting to tell a funny story, and the last words that Tom heard as he left the room were: "Ya-as, ba Jove! don'tcher know," followed by the laughter of the party—laughter provoked not so much by the story as by its narrator.

Tom happened to know just where the dude's room was situated, and he made his way to it.

Upon the bed lay a small handbag, which our hero had often seen in the dude's hands.

It seemed unlikely that this was the receptacle of the missing will, but it might be, and Tom was determined not to leave a stone unturned to accomplish his object.

He attempted to open the bag, but it was locked.

He then tried several keys on his own key-ring in the lock, and was lucky enough to find one that fitted.

He could scarcely repress a cry of exultation as he opened the bag, for the first thing that met his gaze was a large envelope bearing the words: "Last Will and Testament of Thomas Maxwell."

The envelope was unsealed; the boy drew out the precious document and hurriedly scanned its contents. It was indeed the will of his benefactor, leaving all to him!

"The end justifies the means in this case," murmured the boy as he quickly transferred the will to his own pocket.

This done he folded a piece of old newspaper in the exact shape of the will and placed it in the envelope, which he then restored to the bag.

He had scarcely done this when he heard footsteps approaching.

He hastily concealed himself behind the bed-curtains.

The next moment Mrs. Smythe entered the room.

Seizing the valise, she unlocked it and removed the envelope containing—as she supposed—the will, and placed it in her pocket.

"It shall be destroyed," Tom heard her mutter, as she left the room. "It should have been done before; but it is not too late."

"I rather think it is," mused the boy, with a smile, as the woman left the room. "Well, my luck has stood by me. I was just in time."

As soon as Mrs. Smythe was out of the way, he, too, returned to the room where the travelers were assembled.

Just as he entered he saw the woman toss the envelope into the fire.

He also saw Mrs. Maxwell excitedly address her, but he could not hear the words she uttered.

"What was that?" asked the adventuress, in a hurried whisper.

"Well," said Mrs. Smythe, with a quiet smile of triumph, "as it is entirely consumed, I don't mind telling you."

"It was—"

"Yes, as you have evidently guessed, it was the will."

The adventuress glared at her companion, and it was evident that she was about to give vent to her passion in words.

But at this moment there was a sudden commotion in the passage outside, and the next instant one of the good fathers entered, followed by a tall, thickset, determined-looking man who had evidently just arrived.

"Friends," said the monk, addressing the company in English—which he had probably observed was the language used by them

all—"I am pained to say that I believe there is a fugitive from justice among you."

"Yes, and there he is," interrupted the stranger, stepping forward and placing his hand on the shoulder of the alleged English merchant, "John Swift." "Achille Dupont, I arrest you for the murder of Marianne Lascelles!"

CHAPTER XXX.

AN EXCITING NIGHT.

"It's a lie!" shouted the man, springing to his feet. "I am not Achille Dupont. My name is Swift—John Swift—and I—"

"Oh, no, it isn't," interrupted the detective, and with a quick movement he removed the false beard from his prisoner's face, revealing the features of the riding-master.

"*Sacre bleu!*" began the Frenchman, his face convulsed with rage.

"Now, take it easy," interrupted the detective. "You're trapped, and that's all there is about it, my man."

All eyes had been fixed upon the features of the riding-master, and no one had noticed the adventures.

When Dupont's identity had been established, her face had turned livid, and her countenance had given evidences of the utmost terror.

She now arose and was about to leave the room, when Dupont shouted:

"Stop her!"

The attention of all was now directed to the woman.

Her face became even ghastlier than before. She staggered, and would have fallen if the detective had not supported her.

"I am trapped," went on the Frenchman, excitedly; "but if I suffer, she shall not go unpunished."

"What do you mean, you scoundrel?" demanded Mrs. Maxwell, trying to assume an air of bravado. "I never saw you before in my life."

Dupont laughed scornfully.

"You didn't, eh? I married you eight years ago in America, and you deserted me after we had lived together a year, robbing me of every penny I possessed in the world."

"She your wife?" gasped Mrs. Smythe, a new hope illuminating her face.

"Yes. I never was able to gain any trace of her until the other day, when I found her masquerading under the name of Mrs. Maxwell. I should have exposed her on the spot could I have done so without revealing my own identity; but now that I am nabbed she shall suffer, too. She shall leave this place a prisoner."

The adventuress glared at him a few moments without speaking.

Then she said:

"The game's played, and I have lost. But as you, Achille Dupont, have dragged me down, so will I drag her!" indicating Mrs. Smythe.

"What do you mean, woman?" asked that lady, with haughty composure.

"You know well enough what I mean," stormed the adventuress. "Don't think that you are going to enjoy the estate of which I have been robbed, for though you have burned the will—"

"But she hasn't burned the will, as it happens," interrupted Tom, quietly.

It was now his turn to receive the undivided attention of the company.

"What do you mean?" hissed Mrs. Smythe.

"I mean that the envelope you burned contained only waste paper, and that the will is in my pocket at this moment."

"B-ba Jove! it cahn't be, don'tcher know," interrupted Gussie. "It's in my traveling-bag."

"Oh, no, it isn't," laughed Tom. "I took it out."

"Then you are a thief!" almost shrieked Mrs. Smythe.

"Oh, no," replied Tom, quietly. "I took only what belonged to me; you will find your property undisturbed."

Then, for the first time, Gussie and his mother recognized our hero.

"I shall contest the will," said the woman, white with passion. "I withheld it only because its conditions were absurd and unjust."

"Oh, your motives were of the most praiseworthy description, I have no doubt," interposed the adventuress, with a sneering laugh. "Well, I'm glad you've lost the property, though I can't get it; and I hope you will contest the will, for if you do you'll be exposed to the world in your true colors. As for myself"—turning and boldly confronting Dupont—"I defy you to do your worst. Bah!"—and she snapped her fingers—"what charge can you bring against me? None upon which I would be held an hour."

"But I can."

The speaker was the man who had been known to the party as Marsden, and who had been until now a silent but evidently interested listener to the interview.

"Who are you?" demanded the adventuress, and the same inquiry could be read in the faces of all present.

"You don't know me?"

"I do not."

"You shall."

The stranger swept his hand across his face, removing his beard. "Dick Danton!" cried the woman, shrinking back.

"Yes, Nancy Graham, Dick Danton, the man whom you thought you had silenced forever."

"Then she did attempt your life, as I suspected?" cried Mrs. Smythe, eagerly.

"She did. Knowing in some way of our appointment, and seeing herself on the verge of exposure, she pushed me from the deck of the vessel."

"How were you saved?"

"I am an expert swimmer, and I kept myself above the surface for a long time. Then I found a floating plank and clung to it until, some hours later, I was rescued by a steamer bound for Glasgow. Since then I have been on the track of this woman. I did not intend to reveal my identity quite so soon, for my plans were not fully ripened. But it is just as well. This woman I knew to be the wife of Sydney Vinton, but I never heard of this man, Achille Dupont, until to-night."

The pallor of the adventuress' face, the dilation of her nostrils, the heaving of her bosom, all betrayed the intense emotion she felt.

But she only said:

"Bah! I deny this absurd story *in toto*, and I fancy you'll have a pretty hard time to prove it."

And she swept from the room.

"Don't let her go!" shouted Dupont, his eyes gleaming with malignant rage. "I'd rather sacrifice my right hand than allow her to escape my vengeance."

"She will not leave the *hospice*, my son," said the good father, gravely. "To go out to-night would be certain death, for the snow is falling fast and the wind is rising. But think not of earthly vengeance, I counsel you, but make your peace with the Heaven you have offended."

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But Dupont turned from him with a sneer.

At nine o'clock that night all the members of that strangely assorted party were in the rooms assigned them by their pious hosts.

Tom lay awake a long time reviewing the exciting events of the past few days, and congratulating himself upon their happy issue.

The monastery bell had struck the hour of midnight when his eyes were at last closed in slumber.

He was suddenly awakened by a slight noise by his bedside.

Opening his eyes, he saw Gussie Smythe upon his knees upon the floor, a candle by his side, overhauling the contents of his valise.

Evidently the dude was trying to recover the lost will.

But it was not there; at that moment it was reposing under Tom's pillow.

Our hero was about to spring from the bed when Gussie perceived that he was awake.

Leaping to his feet, he rushed forward and clutched the prostrate boy by the throat.

As we have had occasion to say before, the dude was a powerfully built man, and he now had his victim at an immense disadvantage.

His eyes blazed with a fierce light that Tom had never seen in them before.

It was, evidently his purpose to strangle the boy.

Tom struggled to free himself, but his efforts were in vain.

He tried to call for help, but he was unable to articulate a word.

"I have yaw now, yaw young cub," hissed the fellow in his ear, "and I fahncy yaw won't escape me as easily as yaw did before."

Tom's senses were leaving him, he gave himself up for lost, when one of the monks, a muscular young man of about Gussie's own age, rushed in and tore the would-be assassin's grasp from his throat.

"Wretch! would you do murder within these walls devoted to the service of Heaven?" the father cried, with burning indignation.

"B-ba Jove!" whined Gussie, "I—I didn't know what I was doing, don'tcher know. I—I was walking in my sleep."

"It is false!" returned the priest. "But that Heaven directed my steps to this spot you would have succeeded in the commission of the most fearful of all crimes."

"Let him go, father," interposed Tom. "I will see that he is punished."

"It was all a mistake, don'tcher know," added the cowardly dude, as he sneaked out of the room.

When most of the travelers were assembled for breakfast one of the monks entered with a pale, disturbed face.

"The man, Achille Dupont, is dead," he said. "He managed to leave the hospice in the night little imagining how hopeless was his escape. He was overcome by the cold and the storm before he had gone a hundred rods. His body has just been found and brought in."

"I'm glad of it," cried the adventuress, passionately.

"Silence, woman!" said the good father. "Let us all pray for the repose of his soul."

* * * * *

A few days later Tom reached Paris, and at once proceeded to the hotel where he had left Vinton.

He found the young man alone; and, judging from the expression on his face, his mind was ill at ease.

"Tom, thank God!" he cried, fervently. "Oh, how I have longed for your coming! You telegraphed me that you had good news; what is it?"

"The best of news," began the boy.

"She—that woman—is dead!"

"No."

"Then no news you can bring can make me happy again. Tom, I have been mad enough to confess my love to Beatrice, and I have learned from her lips that it is reciprocated. Oh, what right had I, who am bound to another—"

"But you are not bound to another," interrupted Tom. "The woman you have believed your wife had another husband living when she married you."

And he proceeded to inform his friend of the events with which the reader is already acquainted.

"Thank God!" cried Vinton, earnestly; "there may yet be happiness in store for me. But the secret of my life—"

"Shall remain a secret still, or at least until you choose to reveal it to Miss Beatrice. Why pain her with the story now?"

The will Tom recovered was perfectly legal, and as it was never contested, he inherited Mr. Maxwell's fortune.

The adventuress, Nancy Graham, managed to elude the pursuit of her Nemesis, Dick Danton, and, it is rumored, secured a wealthy husband in an old English millionaire.

Sydney Vinton and Beatrice Gresham were made man and wife about six months after the events which we have just related, and are now living happily together in London.

Tom made a flying visit to America to settle his affairs, and then returned to Europe, where he is now traveling.

He has not yet attained his majority, and can still claim the title given him so long ago, of "One Boy in a Thousand."

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 2, of the Brave and Bold Library, will contain a story that will do your heart good to read. Here is the title. Doesn't it sound like the kind of a story you would like to read? "Among the Malays; or, the Mystery of the Haunted Island," by Cornelius Shea. Just the story to read by the fire on a winter evening, while the logs blaze and crackle and the wind howls outside. A story of hairbreadth adventures undergone by Yankee boys, and a description of an island in the Pacific with a mystery hanging over it that puzzled many explorers.

There is plenty of good, rousing, rough-and-tumble fighting with the treacherous Malays, and the mystery of the haunted island is finally solved.

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1.—One Boy in a Thousand; or, Yankee to the Backbone.
By Fred Thorpe. Every boy in America, Yankee or Hoosier, Westerner or Easterner, will be thrilled by this story. A Boston bootblack, with nothing but his own American pluck and grit, determines to see the world, and does it. Wild adventures in the slums of London and Paris, on ocean steamships and on Swiss mountains, fall to his lot. He makes both friends and enemies, and never lacks for excitement. How he finally became a millionaire, outwitting two clever villains, is told in this story.

2.—Among the Malays; or, The Mystery of the Haunted Island. By Cornelius Shea. A voyage in the Indian Ocean, a

shipwreck, a haunted island, mutineers, Malay pirates, gold mines. They look to be the ingredients of a good story, and this story has every one of them in it. Besides that, there are two daring American boys who have to fight for their lives, who show the Malays that Young America can't be downed.

3.—The Diamond Tattoo; or, Dick Hardy's Fight for Fortune. By M. Boyington. A story of a boy living in a country town in New York, who found himself the center of some of the strangest happenings that ever occurred. A diamond mark mysteriously tattooed on his arm; a band of baddies who tried to injure him; a kidnapping plot; outwitting a sharp old lawyer. These are only a few of the features of the story.

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